

History of Cowdenbeath

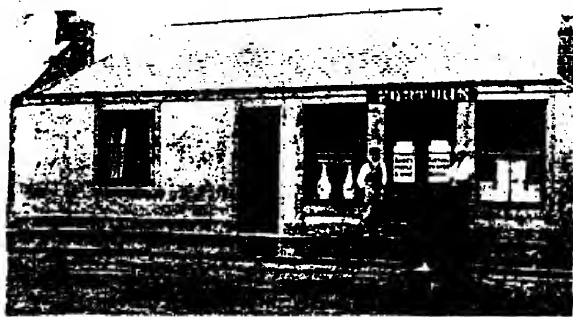
PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION OF

The Jubilee of the Burgh
1890-1940



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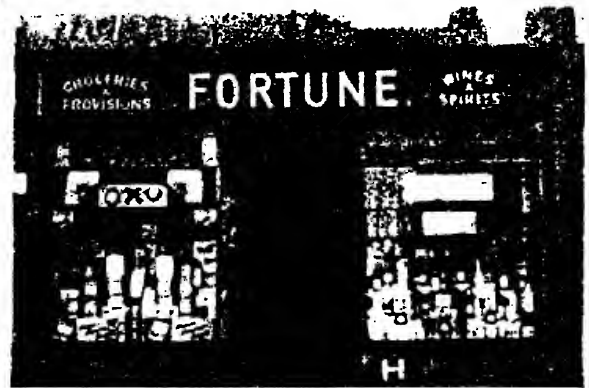
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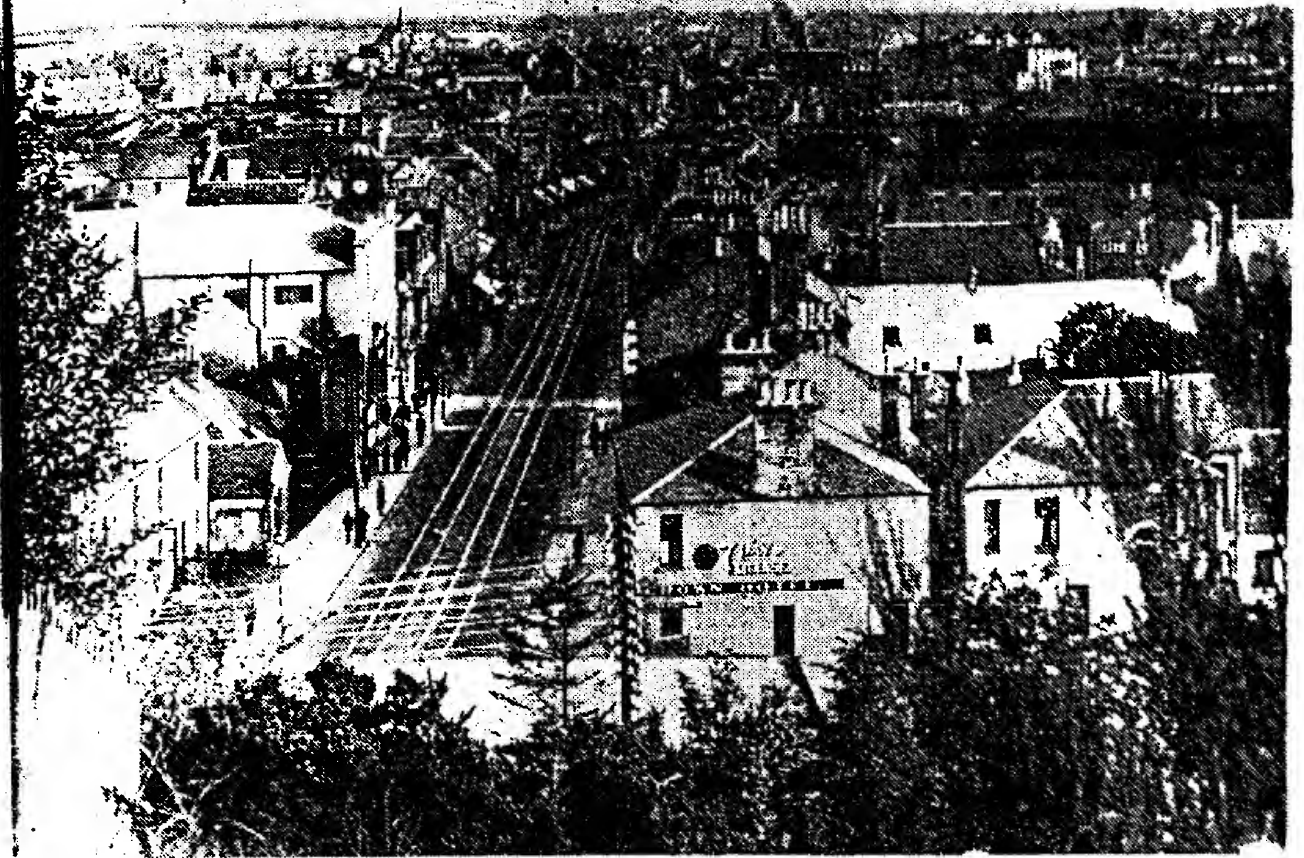
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HISTORY OF COWDENBEATH

BY ROBERT HOLMAN

PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION OF
THE JUBILEE OF THE BURGH
1890 - 1940

DUNFERMLINE:
J. B. MACKIE & CO. LTD.
1941.



Cowdenbeath from North-West.

18632



Preface by
PROVOST
YOUNG

I have been privileged to see an advance copy of the "History of Cowdenbeath." While I was looking forward with interest to learn of the early life of the Burgh, I must admit a pleasant surprise at the wealth of information contained in this volume now presented to the public. I must congratulate the Author on the excellence of the production, and I am sure the vast majority of the inhabitants of the town will find a great delight in reading the very interesting incidents that marked the life of the village and the early days of the Burgh.

Like the rest of the inhabitants, I had no idea that Cowdenbeath had such an interesting history, and, as Provost of the town with many years' experience in municipal work, I must congratulate the pioneers on their splendid work which laid the foundations of the excellent town we have to-day and of which we have just cause to be proud.

The life of Cowdenbeath from the formation of the Burgh 50 years ago has been one of steady progress. I am quite sure that a large number of these books will find their way across the Atlantic and to all parts of the world where Cowdenbeath natives have made their homes, and to those I send the greetings of the town on the historic occasion of the Jubilee of the Burgh.

Like the rest of you, I deeply deplore the circumstances which have prevented us from celebrating the Jubilee of the Burgh in the manner befitting such an occasion, but my message to-day is one of encouragement and strong hopes that soon the War will be over and, in celebrating our national victory, we may still have an opportunity to carry out our local Jubilee celebrations. May that be very soon.

Cowdenbeath, April 1941.

JOHN YOUNG,
Provost.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Now that the History of Cowdenbeath is an accomplished fact, I wish to express the great pleasure I have experienced while collecting the material for this work. On reviewing it, I have only one regret to voice. I would have liked, had I been permitted to have dealt with, individually, many more of the outstanding characters of the village and town whom I have been privileged to meet in my lifetime—nearly all spent in Cowdenbeath. These include the different Provosts of the town, including the "Big-hearted Geordie Penman," Jimmy Murray the barber (the local poet) and all the others who have helped to brighten the town. I feel also I should have specially referred to the outstanding personality of Mr George Terris, who surprisingly found the time outside of his multifarious duties to do so much good anonymously for the community.

Outside of the list of men in public life I have always been impressed with the many modest personalities lying in Beath Churchyard whose lives could easily be associated with the beautiful passages in Gray's "Elegy." I just mention one I can easily picture in my mind—an old white-haired lady, long before the introduction of district nurses, who went about the town nursing the poor and needy sick. Her only call to her self-imposed duty was the knowledge that some poor person was sick and needed nursing and attention, and her only reward was the knowledge that she had done something to relieve pain and to stretch out the hand of sympathy in this practical manner. I have met this dear old lady at all hours of the night and in all weathers, and I have on many occasions raised my hat to her as she passed me on her errands of mercy. Her name—Mrs Hunter, Union Street.

This dear old lady and others I met years ago were the remnants of a beautiful trait found in Cowdenbeath in its mining village days. It was very pronounced in the "miners' raws," and of which a writer has written truly:—

"In cases of sickness, death, or accident, the latter in a mining community, coming upon them at a moment's notice, a sympathetic neighbour is a friend indeed, and it is to her the afflicted one goes for sympathy in the full knowledge that she will not be denied. Should one be sick the other will send her daughter or go herself to 'tidy up her hoose,' make the meals, and attend to the general comforts of both her and her family. In time of mourning and sadness she also mourns, and is a great comfort in an affliction, her kindly words and tactful disposition opening out a means of relief to the bereaved.

"In time of rejoicing—a birth, marriage, or a christening—a next door neighbour is of great assistance, and enters the spirit of the event as much as the woman herself. Her household effects and her labours are given with a spirit of 'neeborliness' knowing well that such services will also be returned in her time of need."

In closing I wish to thank all those ladies and gentlemen who have placed necessary information at my disposal, and I feel I must mention the Rev. G. P. McWilliam and those officials of the Town Council and Parish Council who have so unsparingly given me their assistance.

John G. McWilliam

VISIT OF QUEEN VICTORIA:

Her Impressions

WHEN Queen Victoria passed through Cowdenbeath on her way to Balmoral, just before the introduction of the railway service, she did not appear to be favourably impressed by the appearance of the village and its surroundings. One can scarcely be surprised that the change from the beautiful surroundings of the River Forth area to the marshland and moorland country of the West Fife mining area should have created such an impression.

In these bleak and unpromising surroundings the village of Cowdenbeath was situated, but, out of the midst of these, it has, by the untiring efforts of its inhabitants and their elected representatives, arisen to its present state of prosperity and importance. Although, in the ordinary course of events, mistakes have been made and many laudable schemes frustrated by reason of inexperience and lack of foresight, it must be chronicled that much good has been accomplished and many noteworthy schemes carried to a successful issue.

DERIVATION OF COWDENBEATH.

Opinion is divided as to the origin of the word "Cowdenbeath." It is a common belief that the word was de-

rived from two old words which mean "valley of birches," and this interpretation has been accepted to the extent that the birch tree finds a place in the badge of Beath Secondary School. Another conjecture is that the word "beath" means an estate, and this is strengthened by the fact that so many place names in the neighbourhood end in "beath," such as Meiklebeath, Stevensonsbeath, Leuchatsbeath, Halbeath, and Swintonsbeath. Certainly, the names of Swinton, Stevenson and Meikle give the impression that these were owners of small estates which bore their names, and it may be assumed that Cowdenbeath was once a small estate owned by a man named "Cowden."

EARLY DAYS.

How did Cowdenbeath come into existence? In Blaeus Map of Fife, published in 1654, Cowdenbeath is marked as "Cowden Beth." It can therefore be taken for granted that there was a place of that name at that date, but the probability is that it existed at a much earlier period. This is borne out to some extent by the many geographical mistakes in the map. For instance, a large sheet of water is shown at the foot of Hill of Beath, which appears as several hills named Hills of Bath. At the time of the

"Cowden" means "behind the hill" & "beath" means "estate"

Reformation, and the Protestant activities which preceded it, a conventicle was held on Hill of Beath, so that it can be taken for granted that there was only one hill, not several as seen in Blaeus map, and this conventicle was held in the reign of Henry VIII. of England, who reigned from 1509 to 1547. It is quite possible, however, that the sheet of water at Hill of Beath may be meant for the small pond we have always known as the Bleachfield Pond, and the "river" shown on the map may refer to the small burn that leads from it to Lochgelly Loch. If this is so, it only strengthens the contention that the map was badly drawn, as Bleachfield Pond does not lie at the base of the Hill of Beath, nor has it the dimensions of a loch, and the size of the small burn that flows from it past the new sewage works is much exaggerated. A church is shown at Lumphinnans situated near the River Ore at about the vicinity of No. XI. Colliery. The River Tay is named Tay Fluvius, but it was called the River Tay long before 1654. From these and other indications in the map, it is thought that Blaeus, who was a Dutchman, must have reprinted his map from a much earlier one.

When the actual name of Cowdenbeath came into being is not known, but it is thought it originated when turnpike roads were first made and that it marked the spot of an inn and later of a toll-house erected in the seventeenth century.

ROMAN CAMP.

Who the earliest inhabitants were is a very hard question to answer. According to "Fife: Pictorial and Historical," "a battle was fought here in ancient times between the Caledonians and the Romans, in which the latter were driven from the field. The site of a Roman Camp has been traced at a short distance to the North-West of the Parish of Beath." It is generally considered that that refers to the old golf course on Leuchatsbeath, though that can hardly be described as North-West. It could be more appropriately described as North-East, although there is a common belief that at one time Beath stretched much further East, and in that case the description would be correct. The story of Leuchatsbeath being a Roman Camp

site has been handed down verbally through the generations.

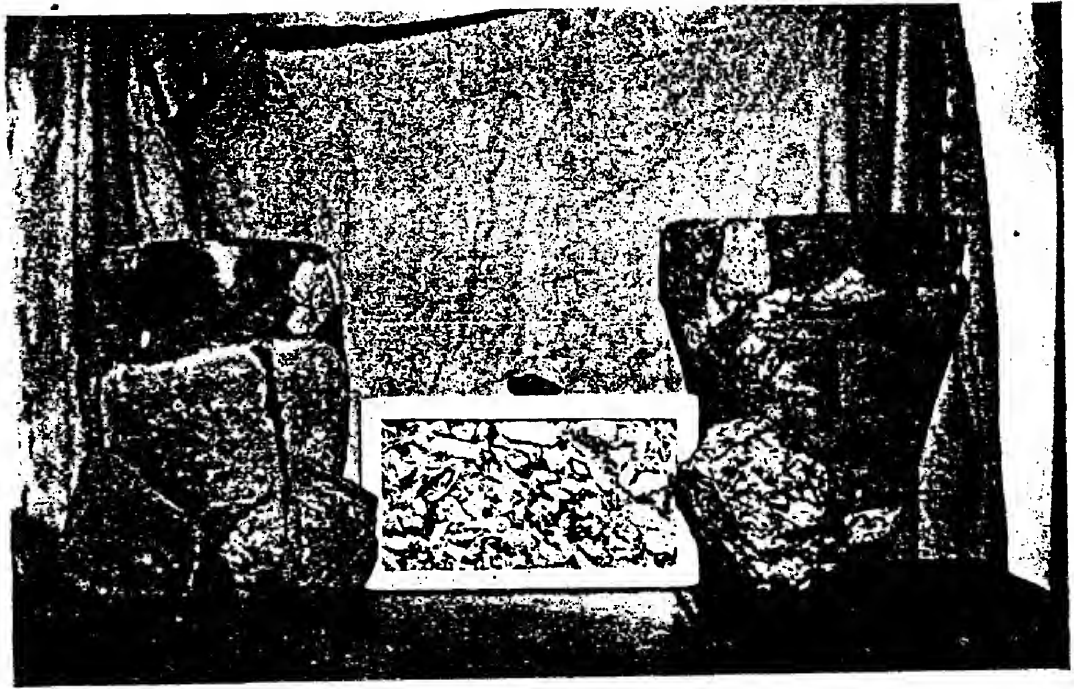
Early Britons

HISTORICAL FINDS.

But there were inhabitants here before the Roman Conquest, as proved by the burial urns found on Cowdenbeath golf course in 1928. There were in all five such urns, all of which had been buried so near the surface that each one had been broken at the top by a plough-share. They were in such a condition, however, that two of them were re-made and are now at Cowdenbeath after being on exhibition in a museum in Glasgow and Kensington Museum in London.

According to two Archæologists, Mr Ludovic Mann, of Glasgow, and Mr Lacaille, of London, they relate to a period before the Roman Age. Mr Mann stated that they were the burial urns of a race who entered Scotland from the North at a time when the only habitable grounds were highlands. They lived at different places for several years before migrating Southwards, and at each place they made a cemetery, always of the same shape, a round piece of ground symmetrical in shape and fifteen yards from any point on the outside to the highest point in the centre. This measurement was tested by Mr Mann and was found to be correct. He further explained that the body was cremated on a fire of wood and what was left of the bones was placed in the urn and covered with a part of dried goatskin before it was buried. The urns were made of clay, and before they hardened in the sun's rays they were ornamented by placing dried grass in a pattern round the top. When the clay was hard the dried grass was removed. A stone hammer, with indentations for the fingers, fashioned to represent a human head, was also found nearby. Dr J. H. Veitch, of Cowdenbeath, was an interested spectator on the occasion of the visit of Mr Mann and Mr Lacaille.

The following year Mr Lacaille, in his address to the Archæological Society, stated that the find had been one of the most interesting archæological discoveries in recent years.



This is a photograph of some of the relics.

On the left and right are two shards or sepulchral urns often described as Cinerary Urns. The one on the left contained the cremated bones of a female and a young person, while the one on the right contained the cremated bones of a large person, probably a male. In this urn was found a small fragment of secondarily worked olive coloured Arran pitch stone, seen on the top of the box containing some of the bones found in the urns. In front of the urn on the right is the quartz hammer head fashioned into the shape of a human head.

Various archæological experts, including a Professor of History from Poland and Sir Arthur Keith, F.R.S., Hon. F.S.A., Scot., speak of the great importance of the find.

The Professor of History states that the cemetery relates to the Neolithic Age, which was from 3000 years B.C. to 1800 B.C., and is of the opinion that the hammer head was an idol of some "holy man" of that period, and of great historical value. Others maintain that there are indications that the cemetery was in use in the Bronze Age, such as the presence of green crust on a fragment of bone indicates that some brass

or copper article had been buried with the bones in an urn, and the presence of the Arran pitchstone an "interesting indication of commerce or travel in the late Bronze Age, for although pitchstone implements have already been noted from the Eastern Counties of Scotland, this is the first recorded example from a locality North of the Forth."

COWDENBEATH AN INN AND CHURCH.

In a very early *Gazeteer* Cowdenbeath was disposed of with two words, and they were: "See Lochgelly." The only information in that was that Lochgelly must have had more importance than Cowdenbeath at one time, which, in a way, brings out some of the truth of the old couplet which runs something like this:—

"Lochgelly was Lochgelly when
Cowdenbeath was a pup,
Lochgelly will be Lochgelly when
Cowdenbeath is petered up."

The word "petered" is inserted here for politeness' sake, and Cowdenbeath will never admit the Lochgelly boast in that last line. How long Lochgelly had the great honour of embracing Cowdenbeath in the matter of giving it a local

habitation is only a matter of conjecture, but, in the next edition of the *Gazeteer*, Cowdenbeath had a space all to itself. Certainly it was not long, for it only stated that Cowdenbeath possessed a hotel and a church. Not much, but still it gives something to go on with. First of all, there was a church, although not in the village, so that it must have been Kirk of Beath, which not only was the only church for Cowdenbeath but for the whole of Beath Parish.



Beath Church

Beath Church is of great antiquity. We have information that the first Beath Church was built in the Thirteenth Century on or near the site of the present Church, which was built at a later date, but very little is known about Church affairs until the Reformation years. Actually twenty years previous to the Reformation the leaders in that movement met at Beath Church to discuss the spread of Protestantism.

In the Seventeenth Century the Reformers were still carrying on, and it is recorded that a great gathering of Protestants was held on Hill of Beath—a meeting that was attended by people from all over Fife. It is known that the speakers that day included two famous men—Rev. John Blackadder, the ejected minister of Traquair, and the Rev. John Dickson, who was removed from his charge at Rutherglen. The meeting was held in the well-known hollow at the

top of the Hill, the crater of an extinct volcano, associated with many of the Rev. Jacob Primmer's Protestant conventicles at the end of the last and beginning of the present century. It was well known that the church dignitaries had the support of the military to suppress such meetings, and on that occasion the military put in an appearance in the midst of the service. However, the military, according to one statement recorded, had more gumption than the church dignitaries and the service was allowed to go on without molestation.

By this time, the Stewarts or Morays, who own a great deal of the land in Beath, had settled down at Donibristle. The first to come was Sir James Stuart, a direct descendant of Robert, Duke of Albany, who obtained a charter conferring upon him the lands and barony of Beath in 1545. The next year his son, James, was appointed one of the Canons of Inch Colme, and in 1590 his son, Henry, followed him. He was the younger brother of the Bonnie Earl of Moray, who was murdered on the lawn of Donibristle House and who, according to the song written about him, "was too guid to dee." The Bonnie Earl had succeeded to the title by his wife, the eldest daughter of the Regent Moray. The Charter which gave to Sir James Stewart the Barony of Beath is actually dated 1543, and was conferred on him for a very large sum in connection with the repair of the monastery lately burned by the enemies from England—the lands belonging to Baith, Kelty, the lands of Craigbeath, occupied by John Orrock. Kir Baith, occupied by John Drummond, Bathillocks, Hilltoun, Schelis (which later became Shiels), Eastertoun, Mourtoun and Nethertown. Coalheughlandis, with the coals thereof, occupied by John Bererage, and Mill of Beath with mill lands and multures thereof." Before the Reformation, Beath was under Dunfermline, and in 1574 Alexander Steven was appointed Redaire of Beath at a stipend of £16 per year. One of the prominent reformers in this district at that time was the Rev. John Durie, who lived an adventurous life in carrying out his fight for the Protestant faith. In 1573 he was translated to Edinburgh, and was imprisoned for making an attack on the Royal family. Though admonished, he was banished

from the city. The people demanded his return, and he had a triumphal entry to Edinburgh as a result. His connection with Cowdenbeath is that he had a pension of "sixty six pundes thirteen shillings and fourpence" on the surety of rents in the Parish of Beath. This pension was granted by Robert Pitcairn, the Commendator of Dunfermline.

PIONEER MINERS.

Why a Dunfermline Commendator could give away these sureties on Beath lands was something hard to understand until a charter was found, granted in 1572 in connection with a "coal-heuch" by the Commendator of Dunfermline Abbey to Sir William Douglas of Loch Leven. The monks of Dunfermline were pioneer miners, as is well known, and worked on outcrop seams in Pittencrieff Glen away back in the thirteenth century. Not only so, but it is very interesting to know from the charter in question that they had as well for many years drawn coal from a mine at Kelty.

UNCHARTED MINE AT KELTY.

Several years ago an uncharted coal mine was discovered at Kelty in the vicinity of the present Blairadam Brickwork. It was found by workmen who were digging for clay for the brickwork at a depth of about 20 feet. They came across a narrow roadway about 3 feet broad and 3 feet high, along which it was quite apparent the coal was carried in the dark, the person carrying the coal being guided by a ledge of coal left for that purpose on the left hand side, so that while he or she (probably a he, if the coal was worked by the monks) carried the coal with his right hand and directed himself with his left. The shaft of that pit, if there was a vertical shaft, was never discovered. In all probability it was only an incline and emerged at the surface and, of course, was filled in during the course of time.

FIRST BEATH KIRK.

The date of the first Beath Church is also that of Aberdour and Dalgety Churches, as the charters were granted by the Bishop of Dunkeld at the same

time. However, while the original buildings of Aberdour and Dalgety still stand, the Church of Beath fell into ruins in the middle of the sixteenth century, and we are told that, following the Reformation, while all other churches in Fife had been planted and grew, poor Kirk of Beath was neglected and lay desolate.

TERRIBLE RECORD.

We are told that, on Sunday, instead of meeting to hear the minister or, as he was called, "pastoure," young and old assembled and made the "Lorde's Daye" one of profane mirth. At these meetings a "pyper" sometimes appeared, and so strong a hold had "Sautin" on the people that many went as far as to dance and play football. Not only so, but the men sometimes "fell out and wounded one another." The church was neglected, and, as a result, we are told that the original pre-reformation church became frequented by nomads and became a shelter for sheep.

PRESENT CHURCH ERECTED.

This is a terrible record for the early Cowdenbeath people, but here Kelty came to the rescue, and we find that a Mr Alexander Colville, belonging to Blair at Kelty, became tired of such scenes of debauchery and drinking in excess on the Sunday, and when he was "stirred by the Lord" he convened a meeting at Kelty to consider the rebuilding of Kirk of Beath. He found this very difficult, as the people in the Parish were so poor; but he found many farmers, however, who gave the use of horses and carts free for the carting of stones from neighbouring quarries and others who gave their labours to the Committee, so that in a few months the reconstructed building was opened. Then there was a great revival, and so many people came from far and near, even "out of every citie," that there was difficulty in providing a preaching place for the pastor. Thus we have that much to thank Kelty for.

History of Church

At this time the Rev. John Rorr or Row of Carnock, mentioned in the

records of the Kirk Session of Beath, took a great interest in Beath Church and had Beath created a separate ecclesiastical Parish, disjoined from Aberdour and Dalgety in 1643. But the Rev. Robert Bruce, minister of Aberdour, Dalgety and Beath, was not too enthusiastic, for though he had neglected Beath very badly, he refused to surrender any of the endowments connected with Beath. We find him in 1646 applying to the Estates of Parliament for the ratification of the document of 1637, placing him in charge of the three kirks and entitling him to constant stipend, teinds, fruits, rents and emoluments. He was successful, but the people of the Parish rose to the occasion and raised £1500 to provide a stipend for the minister, the Rev. Mr Smith of Culross. We sometimes wonder if the holding of a bazaar, whist drive and dance, raffle tickets or football sweepstakes (seeing that they played football on Sunday previously) were the means of getting that £1500, for we read that the population of the Parish of Beath in 1801 was only 613, and only rose by 116 in the next twenty years. It is feared that further records of the Church have been lost, until a minute book of Beath Kirk Session commences in 1691. It begins with the ordination of the Rev. Alexander Steedman on 9th June, 1691. In the second minute, that of a meeting held the same month, the names of David Dewar, Lassodie, John Stevenson of Stevensonsbeath, and Hutton of Hilton appear. This is very interesting, as it associates the well-known Laird Dewar with Lassodie and also gives an indication of how Stevensonsbeath, a part of Cowdenbeath, got its name. It is very unfortunate that the writing and spelling of the session clerk in these days is so difficult to decipher that much valuable information is lost.

However, in a later book we can trace the ministers of the church from 1798. In that year the minister, the Rev. James Reid, died on 24th March, a gentleman who left behind him some interesting information about the church. The Rev. James Hutton followed on 16th August, 1799, and he died in 1811, and the Rev. Thomas Millar was ordained in 1812. The next minister was the famous Dr Fergusson, who was ordained in 1815, and who was minister of the church until 1866. The Rev. Mr Hogg was

minister until 1870, and in his place came the Rev. A. C. McPhail, who was minister for six years. The Rev. John Sinclair was the next minister, and he preached until his death in 1915. He was followed by the Rev. A. J. S. Dickie, who was translated to Cambuslang in 1928. The Rev. Mr Marshall was only minister for a year, and in 1929 came the present minister, the Rev. G. P. McWilliam.



Rev. Dr Fergusson, Beath Church.

BEATH KIRK SESSION AND RELIEF OF POOR.

The Kirk Session of Beath did more than look after the interests of the church—they looked after the poor of the Parish and paid out poor relief prior to the passing of the Poor Law Act of 1845. From the records, it is very apparent that the payments to the poor only provided for a bare sustenance, a matter of a few shillings per week in some cases and less in others.

THE BERRY BEQUEST.

Another very interesting book in the possession of Beath Kirk Session is the Minute Book of the Berry Bequest, a fund to which many of the successful natives of Cowdenbeath have been indebted for the education that fitted them for their present positions. There is a pathetic touch in the pretty story of the

foundation of that Bequest, which is not generally known. Reading between the lines of the legal phraseology in a will that constitutes the Bequest, it is learned that a certain Francis Berry and his wife, Jean Currie of Moss-side, Cowdenbeath, had a son, John Berry, who was a student of divinity. He was their only son, and their hearts were set on his becoming a great preacher; but that was denied them by his untimely death. Just before his death he recommended his parents to set aside part of "what they were possessed" as a fund for educating certain poor of the Parish. The parents willingly acceded to this request of their son, and on the death of the survivor of them in 1828 the Berry Bequest came into existence. Many poor children were given free education at Cowdenbeath School and Kelty School at Cantsdam, and when school fees were abolished other children received fees for their education in Dunfermline High School and, in some cases, assistance to be educated at Edinburgh University. The money for the Bequest came from feu-duties and rents of house property in Lochgelly, where Francis Street and Berry Street are named after the benefactors. The last meeting of the Berry Bequest Committee was held in Lochgelly on 1st March, 1885, and after that date the administration was placed in the hands of Beath School Board and, after the passing of the Education (Scotland) Act 1918, to the Fife Education Committee.

DAYS OF BURKE AND HARE.

In connection with the days of Burke and Hare, who robbed newly made graves of the bodies interred and took them to Edinburgh, Beath Churchyard has been spoken of as one of the places visited, and precautions were taken to prevent body-snatching. For many years what were taken to be two iron coffins without lids dug up from the old churchyard lay near the old hearse house. These were not coffins, but were old-time "safes," and were of different size, and one was placed over the coffin to hinder the work of the body-snatchers. Another preventative was the placing of a large flat stone on top of the grave. This stone was very heavy, and was placed on the grave

and removed by means of a trestle hoist, the rope going through the stone and fastened on the under side, and it remained there until the danger of "snatching" was past. The two "safes" have disappeared, but the flat stone is still to be seen near the church. In addition to the above precautions, the graves were guarded by armed farm workers, who kept watch for several nights at the churchyard.

KIRK ROAD AND RIGHT OF WAYS.

The fact that Beath Church supplied a very large area was responsible for many "kirke roads" coming into existence, roads that form rights-of-way to-day; but several have been lost. One such road was from Lassodie, and entered upon the Old Perth Road about a hundred yards North of the Church. Another was from Lumphinnans direction right through the present Public Park of Cowdenbeath. That has been lost for want of being used. Another kirk road from Aberdour Parish crossed Broad Street at the old Bleachfield. Part of that road is used to-day, although slightly altered, at Moss-side Colliery. Another right-of-way brought about by being a kirk road was thought to be from Fordell, and took the track of the Fordell Colliery railway from the centre of the village to the site of the Alice Pit and joined the Moss-side right-of-way in Broad Street.

One tombstone—that of the Aitken family of Loch-head—points to the existence of a kirk road from that farm over a mile to the East of Cowdenbeath, and that may have been the right-of-way that passed Foulford Pit, known as the Fair Helen.

THOUGHTS OF THE POOR.

In connection with that tombstone there is a very interesting story. This stone is a large flat one immediately to the South of the Church. One of the persons buried there was a Miss Aitken of Lochhead, who ordered that a hundred pounds be set aside for investment and the interest from the money was to be taken to keep the grave neat and tidy, to keep the church walls and gates in repair, and the rest was to be given annually to the five poorest per-

sons in the Parish. The first part of the instructions is being faithfully carried out, but there is no need for the second part, as the maintenance of the walls and gates is now the responsibility of the County Council. The last part, too, is being carried out, and each year the re-

mainder of the interest on the money now invested in war loans, after the grave has been attended to, is given to the five poorest persons in the Parish. There are always a number of persons who lay claim to be the poorest in the Parish, states the Rev. G. P. McWilliam.



Cowdenbeath 50 Years Ago, showing Inn and Old Toll

There is no doubt that the Inn mentioned in the brief description of Cowdenbeath in the *Gazeteer* was the Cowdenbeath Inn. That building did not always stand where it does to-day. It was on the other side of the road where the premises of Messrs Dicks Co-operative Institutions now stand, and previously owned by Mr George Bickerton. There was a posting establishment at the rear, which was acquired by Cowdenbeath Coal Company, Limited. It was certainly an old building, and was one of the many similar inns that stood on the side of main turnpike roads, and it is recorded that on one occasion it was the scene of the changing of horses when Queen Victoria coached to Balmoral. The Inn, on its present site, was built by Mr McLean, on whose death his widow married Mr John Brunton, who also owned Thistleford Farm, one of the few

farmers to own his own threshing mill driven by a water wheel, and many of the smaller farmers used to get their threshing done at his mill. On the death of Mr Brunton, the widow carried on. She was a very popular hostess in the village, and was familiarly spoken of as Eezie McLean and later as Eezie Brunton. On her death, the hotel was taken over by Charles McLean, her son. He was followed by his son, Mr William McLean, who was killed in France on the day that the Armistice was signed in 1918.

Brunton's Hall, on the opposite side of the street, was built by Mr Brunton, and subsequently acquired by Cowdenbeath Co-operative Society. It was in Brunton's Hall that the public meeting decided to form the village into a Burgh on 24th November 1890. When the new turnpike road from Queensferry to Perth was constructed, the Inn gained much in importance. Before this time,

the road to Perth did not pass through Cowdenbeath, but passed through Hill of Beath, Kelty and Maryburgh, where it took a sharp turn, and thence to the Parenwell Bridge. It can, then, be gathered that Cowdenbeath was made much more important when the new North Road was made and passed along Broad Street and High Street, long before Perth Road, as a street, was thought of.

VILLAGE OF CROFTS.

There is every reason to believe that Cowdenbeath was at one time only an agricultural district, with numerous crofts and small farms. Besides Thistleford Farm, there were the farms of White Threshes, where D.C.I. restaurant is now situated; another was in Union Street; another was in High Street where the New Picture House now stands; and another where Armstrong's joiner workshop is situated; another, called McNaught's Dairy, in Foulford Road; another in the vicinity of Bowling Green Street, and another called Cowdenbeath Farm near the site of what is now No. 7 Pit, where hunting dogs were bred.

Little is known about Cowdenbeath in the early days, but from the rapid decrease in the population at the close of the eighteenth century it may be assumed that it was then one of Scotland's slowly decaying villages.

A DESERTED VILLAGE.

In 1790 a statement was made that the population of Beath Parish had decreased considerably within the previous twenty years. This was not due to any "epidemical distemper," for the people were very healthy, but because of the practice of laying out so much ground in grass, by which means the farmers carried on their labours with fewer hands than formerly. However, an increase took place between 1821 and 1831 because of the additional number of men employed at the collieries. During the previous hundred years the population of the Parish had increased from 450 to 8296. This increase, to a very large measure, referred particularly to Kelty, where the digging of coal on the coal heughs had been carried on before it was started at Cowdenbeath.

It is true to state that great poverty was prevalent, and an old lady of Cowdenbeath, who died many years ago, said that at this time poverty was so rampant that a large marrow bone was used on successive days to make soup in cottar houses. She got this information from her aged mother, who resided for many years at Kirk of Beath. This was before the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.

The demand for the repeal of these Laws was taken up at Lochgelly, where a large procession was formed to come to Cowdenbeath. In the front was a very large loaf carried aloft by a prominent citizen of Lochgelly.

IRON ORE DISCOVERED.

The population of the Parish doubled itself in the next ten years—from 1252 to 2390—and the chief reason was the discovery of rich beds of iron ore at Cowdenbeath.

PROSPERITY BEGINS.

About 1850 the Oakley Iron Company, who had blast furnaces at Oakley, came on the scene. Shafts for iron ore were sunk in the vicinity of the old Foulford Washer. It was in the mining for ore that the discoveries of the coal seams were made, and pits were sunk at every corner of the town. Prior to this, coal had been mined at Fordell for over a century, but the discovery of the coal seams at the depth they were found came as a pleasant surprise, considering the dip in the coal strata at Fordell, and it was thought that at Cowdenbeath the seams would be at such a depth as to be almost unworkable, but it was found that the much condemned "hitches," instead of being a drawback had proved a blessing, for the disturbance of the metals had thrown up the coal seams to a much higher level. Iron ore became less valuable because of the large quantities found in Sweden, and coal gradually took its place.

AN EARLY COAL PIONEER.

One of the earliest pioneers in the coal industry in this district was a John Syme of Cartmore (then known as Kirkmoor), but little is known of him or his ventures. Small pits were opened out at many places. There were two in the

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vicinity of Jubilee Park, which were sunk only to the upper seams, and the coal was disposed of by a "hutch way" to two different points in High Street and carted to the various customers or to the docks at Burntisland. Oakley Iron Company became a Coal Company and their houses, which were on both sides of Broad Street near High Street, became homes for coal miners instead of iron ore miners. By the time No 3 Pit was sunk, behind the present Labour Exchange, the North British Railway Company had come to the village and carried the coal for export to Burntisland and Methil.

MOSS MORRAN DISASTER.

One serious mining disaster falls to be recorded in the history of Cowdenbeath. It occurred in 1901 outside the Burgh boundary, when eight men lost their lives.

A number of men were working in a section of No. 12 Pit, Donibristle Colliery, at a considerable distance from the pit bottom, and their task was to make an outlet to the surface. When they were working about fifteen yards from the surface they broke through into a bed of moss and peat. They were trapped by the thousands of tons of the liquid moss that surged in upon them,

blocking all means of escape. The alarm spread, and a rescue party braved the dangerous task of trying to rescue their fellow-workers. They, too, were trapped. A second rescue party was formed from the hundreds of volunteers, and they had just sent word to the surface that they had come across some of the men originally trapped when, all at once, there was another surge of the moss, and they, too were cut off. The work of rescue went on, and although some men were rescued, eight men lost their lives. Four of these—George Hutchison, Alexander Smith, William Forsyth and D. Campbell—had been originally entombed, while the other four were members of the first rescue party—William Hynd, James McDonald, Thomas Rattray (a member of Cowdenbeath Town Council) and Andrew Paterson.

In recognition of their bravery, inscribed gold watches were presented by the Proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* to Messrs John Sheddon, John Jones and Robert Law. Gifts of a hundred pounds each were given by Mr Andrew Carnegie to these three men and also to Mr James Dick, and, in addition, all four were the recipients of a diploma and a medal of the Grand Priory Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem in England.



Robert Law.



Richardson.



John Sheddon

Of these four men, only ex-Bailie Sheddon is alive. Law is the Law of football fame, and Jones was a well-known evangelist. Eighteen others received a gold medal suitably inscribed. A local author, referring to the incident, writes in "Character Studies of the Miners of West Fife":—"In the formation of a person's character the environment exerts a powerful influence. This fact is strongly emphasised in the life of the miner and his family. His labour is of a perilous nature, and though his speech and manner may be apt to be rough and ready, the qualities that produce heroes are often conspicuous. A very praiseworthy feature is the willingness with which a miner will risk his life in the hope of saving the life of a fellow-workman. In such unfortunate disasters as Moss Morran, Donibristle, and at Hill of Beath, there was no need to call for volunteers to risk their lives to try and save the unfortunate men when, especially in the former instance, a yawning chasm in a treacherous bog was the only entrance. 'Abandon hope all ye who enter here' seemed to be inscribed round that veritable gate of death. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that experience taught them the great risk, volunteers vied with each other to make a last effort to rescue the imprisoned men. And when all was over and

the roll was called, who were found missing? Four of the original party of volunteers. This action portrays the true miner. Who in their class would not have done likewise?"

NAME OF COWDENBEATH DECIDED.

At the time when the coal trade started its boom, Cowdenbeath was divided into a few districts named after the various farms. One part was called Cowdenbeath, after the farm near the present No. 7 Pit. Another part was called White Threshes, called after the farm just on the Burgh Boundary on the Burntisland Road not far from the present Labour Club Rooms and Hall, better known locally as The Ritz. Another part was called Foulford, after the Foulford Estate, acquired later by the Cowdenbeath Coal Company, who took over the Forth Coal Company, known before as the Oakley Coal Company. This district was in the vicinity of Union Street, and some distance to the East Foulford Pit was sunk. This pit was not very far from the original Foulford Pit which previously belonged to Lochgelly Coal Company and which later was used as an auxiliary shaft for the new pit. There were, however, two other districts—Kirkford, in the vicinity of Cross Keys on the Old Perth Road, and Moss-side, named after the farm there. In consequence of the steady increase in the population, caused by this development, the village was now assuming the proportions of a town, and it was felt by the inhabitants that the time had come when the various districts should be under one name.

A public meeting was called for this purpose, and, according to the late Mr Archibald Hodge and the late Provost Marshall, the choice narrowed down to two names—Cowdenbeath and White Threshes—and the former was the ultimate decision. Later, in 1890, when the question of a name arose again at the proposed formation of the village into a burgh, two names were mentioned this time—Cowdenbeath and Foulford—and again Cowdenbeath was decided upon.

FIFE COAL COMPANY ARRIVES.

Coal was being worked very extensively at this time, and no surprise was created when, in 1896, the Cowdenbeath

Coal Company was merged into the Fife Coal Company. An older Coal Company to be taken over by the Fife Coal Company was that of Donibristle, owned by the Naysmith family of Donibristle, and this colliery, although it provided work for the inhabitants of the village of Donibristle, also provided work for a large number who resided at Cowdenbeath. During this time most of the miners who resided in the South side of Cowdenbeath—in Arthur Street, Arthur

Place, Bridge Street and Burnside Place—were employed by Lochgelly Iron and Coal Company, who owned the Raith Colliery nearby. It was the need for housing accommodation for their workmen that was responsible for the Company building the houses that formed Arthur Place and Arthur Street. The houses in Thistle Street mostly belonged to a gentleman named Halley, which was responsible for the street being originally called Halley's Row.



Photograph of veteran miners taken in 1896 at the merging of Cowdenbeath Coal Company with Fife Coal Company.

Back Row—Joe Walker, James Philip, John Hunter, Peter Drylie, William Beveridge.

Front Row—John Cameron, James Menzies, James McGuire, Walter Muirhead, John Miller, John Ford.

More Prosperity

YEARS OF THE BIG "PEYS."

About seventy years ago the village became more prosperous. Much of this increased prosperity was due to the Franco-Prussian War, which brought about a great demand for coal. Miners, in the days of the "big wages" often referred to by veterans of the coal mines, had more money than they ever had, and not a few invested their extra money in house property.

It has often been said that, when a

new pit has been sunk, the miners' houses have been thrown down any old way near the pit. But this was not so at Cowdenbeath, on account of the fact that the village lined very important main roadways. Vacant spaces in High Street began to be filled up and extra houses were built in Union Street (Gardiner's Land) and Halley's Row. By 1870, Cowdenbeath had begun to be recognised as a centre, but it was a long time before the inhabitants got over the habit of looking upon Dunfermline as their shopping centre.

Every Saturday the wives used to go to the Old Station (then the only one)

and ask "a ticket for the toon," and the clerk knew well that "toon" meant Dunfermline. Shops, however, started to spring up, mostly owned by natives of the village.

Seventy Years Ago

OLD LADY DESCRIBES HIGH STREET.

An old Cowdenbeath lady, who was born near the site of the present Town House, recalls the general lay out of High Street, the only principal street in 1870. Opposite her birthplace was the Diamond Row, so called because of the small diamond shaped slates on the roof. Foulford Street did not then exist, and two houses had to be knocked down to make the entrance when that street was formed. At the North end of High Street there was a licensed grocer's shop owned by Mr Robert Crawford, and there was nothing further North with the exception of Mr Ewan's property at Cressy Burn. Further down, at the present Co-operative Fruit Shop, was a little row of houses known locally as "Clapperbum." Mr Kinninmonth had a shop here, and next door to it was Mr Wilson's tailor shop. Not far away was the house of Mr Kinnell, who was for many years the street scavenger, whose wife, Betty, was a very industrious body and reared "braw" pigs. It was also here that John McArthur had the first butcher's shop. Nearby was the smith, Mr Lindsay, whose daughters had a baby linen shop for many years.

INVENTED MOTOR CAR.

Mr Lindsay was succeeded by Robert Cook, who in the early nineties took a great interest in the possibility of a motor car. He always maintained he could make a car on rubber tyres to go at a speed of at least twenty miles per hour, but his great difficulty was the law then existing that a man with a red flag had to walk in front of any mechanically driven vehicle.

WELL KNOWN FAMILIES.

Miss Murray had the Foulford Arms, previously owned by Mr Christie, whose



Mr A. Campbell

brother had a baker shop almost next door. Above the shop lived a well-known Cowdenbeath family by the name of Penman. Mr Penman was a prominent mining man, and was employed in sinking local pits. He spent his last days in the Station Hotel, Pittenweem. Further South stood the Commercial Hotel, owned in these days by Mr Sneddon, who sold the hotel to Mr Alexander Campbell, senior. In Union Street the principal parties were Mr James Paul, the father of Councillor John Paul, who came from Kelty; further down was a small dairy owned by relatives of Mr Gardiner, who built Gardiner's Hall; further down there was the grocer's shop of Mr John Carmichael, who used to know his customers as "the wife wi' the white shawl" or "the wife wi' the red hat" and such titles were entered in his business book. Not far away was a house belonging to the Davidson family, who later removed to Union Street, when the different families occupied all of Davidson's Buildings.

Beyond the railway bridge were several small buildings owned by Mr Shand, and on that site was built the present Gothenburg Public House. These small buildings were used for housing stores during the building of the Cowdenbeath to Perth railway.

Next door was the building for many years associated with the name of Mr Peter McIntosh, one of Cowdenbeath's early tailors, while nearby was the property of Mr Glass, a painter. John was the son-in-law of the late Mr James Kirk, contractor, and while he never entered public life he was one of the town's strongest critics on social affairs. In this vicinity was the photographer's studio belonging to Mr Burt. This building served a double purpose at one time, as it was here that the members of the Baptist Church met during the time their church in Chapel Street was being erected. Mr Gardener from Dunfermline also had a studio here, but the best known was Mr Andrew Roxburgh, who was another very severe critic of the actions of the Town Council about the beginning of the present century.

The Pollock family settled down on the North side of the level crossing. The most outstanding member of the family was the mother, who for many years carried on business in second-hand furniture. She had several sons who carried on business—one as a barber, another a painter, and one was a builder, while a daughter (Mrs Greig) was widely known as the proprietrix of a temperance hotel and caterer at nearly all the local "balls" and public functions. Then there was the colliery level crossing, with green fields beyond. Then there was nothing until the colliery offices were reached, and then came Gardiner's property and Gardiner's Hall, of which more later. Meikle's licensed grocer's shop came next. Here Mr James Fortune (later Bailie Fortune) served his apprenticeship before he took over the shop in the North End of the town. Meikle's shop was later taken over by Archibald Hodge, who was an underground manager in No. 3 Pit. The original Cowdenbeath Inn adjoined these premises, but had been converted into dwelling-houses, which were afterwards taken over by Mr George Bickerton and converted into a tailor's and draper's shop. Cowdenbeath Coal Company's works, shops and stables adjoined and then came Cowdenbeath Station.

On the other side of High Street was the Cowdenbeath Inn and the old toll-house. This was one of the latest in the country to stop collecting tolls. Mr McArthur, the butcher, used to relate that it used to cost him eightpence

to get a cart load of "draff" for his cows from Auchtertool or the Grange Distillery, as he had to pass this toll-house and also the tollhouse at Beverkae on the road, both going and coming.

Mrs Wilson, of Foulford Road, who died many years ago, used to relate that relatives of hers used to be in charge of the Cowdenbeath Tollhouse, and that a certain young farmer with a good horse used to jump over the gate. This toll-house became the barber's shop of a local personality, Jimmy Murray.

The first property at the South end of High Street was Thomson's buildings, which accommodated the first Post Office, with Mr A. Thomson as postmaster.

EARLY POSTAL FACILITIES.

Previous to this, the letters for Cowdenbeath were delivered from Lochgelly Post Office by a postman named John Malcolm, who used to wait until a certain time before he collected letters from the village to take back with him to Lochgelly. His daily round was a long one, extending all the way from Lochgelly, and included all Cowdenbeath and Lumphinnans and the surrounding farm houses.

HOW COWDENBEATH GOT POST OFFICE.

As the village grew there was a strong demand for a post office at Cowdenbeath, and the reply to the demand was that this could not be granted until a certain amount of mail was despatched from Cowdenbeath. The amount of business required to get the post office established was stated in the official correspondence. Then a subterfuge was resorted to to satisfy the Post Office authorities during a test week. The amount of business went up by a very large extent within the next few weeks, and the Post Office authorities were satisfied that a post office was justified, and Archie Thomson was appointed Postmaster. If the Post Office authorities of that time had placed a censorship on the letters sent out from Cowdenbeath they would have received a shock, as many of the envelopes contained only pieces of used blotting paper and some of the parcels contained nothing more than firewood. Many Cowdenbeath people during the test weeks suddenly

remembered receiving letters to which they had not replied, and many were in the following lines:—"Dear _____, Just a few lines to let you know we are trying our best to get a Post Office at Cowdenbeath." After all, the outlay was worth the extra stamps, and Cowdenbeath got a Post Office sooner than they otherwise would have done: Mr Thomson's father was a shopkeeper who, after a short time at the Australian Gold Mines, returned and became the country postman, his round being the delivery of letters to the various farms.

Eight houses of the Oakley Raws in this vicinity were later demolished to make way for the new Co-operative Store building erected in 1891. One of the four small houses near Paul Place was occupied by the parents of Mr Andrew Wilson, who subsequently became Provost of the Burgh. There were two small houses on the South side of the level crossing called the "High Blocks" although they were single storey in height. The Masonic Arms of to-day was The Vaults public-house, owned by John Nicol. Further on to the North resided the well-known Rollo family, a daughter of which family married James Laing, who became second Provost of the town. Then came the Diamond Row already mentioned, where the Blamey family resided. One of the sons, Thomas, became one of the most prominent social workers in the County of Fife and was Provost of the Burgh.

BIRTHPLACE OF SIR HECTOR HETHERINGTON.

It will be noticed in this description of High Street seventy years ago that there were no banks and no chemists' or watchmakers' shops. The first chemist's shop was opened as a branch shop by Mr Dow of Kinross, and the first manager was Mr Hetherington, one of whose sons is Sir Hector Hetherington, Principal of Glasgow University, and who was born in a house in Broad Street.

There were two doctors in the town, Dr Mungall and Dr Nelson, and patients had to go to Lochgelly for medicine. Simple remedies, such as castor oil, Epsom salts, etc., could be obtained from the numerous "wee shops" in the town.

The doctors, too, always had supplies of these simple remedies and other

medicines, which they gave to the miners and their families.

POPULATION DOUBLED.

After 1870 the population, which was then 1,500, continued to increase rapidly, and actually doubled in the next twenty years. During this period wages of miners fell to about an average of 3/- per day, but gradually improved until they reached the much discussed basic rate of 4/- in 1888.

UNEMPLOYMENT UNKNOWN.

There was always plenty of work and unemployment was unknown. Gradually, the town took a form and shape not so much by the making of new streets as the filling up of the gaps in the existing streets. A few houses appeared on either side of Foulford Road near the quarry. There is a story to the effect that a father and sons started to build a house there on a Monday morning and had it practically ready for occupation by the end of the week. Stones for the house were taken from Foulford Quarry. Building was very cheap, but sites in High Street became more valuable as the demand for business premises increased.

COWDENBEATH CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

Cowdenbeath Co-operative Society were amongst the first to foresee the advantage of erecting modern business premises. Dunfermline Co-operative Society had a branch at Cowdenbeath, but a few co-operative enthusiasts thought that the time had come to have an independent store in Cowdenbeath, and negotiations were entered into with Dunfermline Co-operative Society to take over their branch, and in 1875 Cowdenbeath Co-operative Society was established in that property now belonging to the firm of Peter Brand, Limited. The first President was one of a well-known Cowdenbeath family, Mr William Davidson, and Mr Alexander Birrell was the first salesman. In 1878 Mr William Paxton was appointed head grocery salesman. He was a personality in the town, and much of the success of the Society at that time was due to his untiring service. The Society prospered, and at the end of 1890 it was

considered that larger premises were necessary to cope with increased business and, accordingly, new buildings were erected on the other side of the street in 1892. The opening ceremony

two employees received a gold watch from the firm on completing 50 years' service.

Previous to this, Mr George Bickerton had opened a draper's shop in the town



Mr Davidson



Mr Cowan.

was performed by Provost Henry Mungall.

Since that time, however, the Co-operative Society gradually prospered, and to-day it is one of the largest Co-operative Societies in the country.

FIFTY YEARS' SERVICE.

In 1873 the late Mr John Forrest opened a small tailor's shop at the North end of the town on the site of a wood store presently owned by Mr J. B. Armstrong. Later he removed to the present premises in High Street, where business is still carried on by members of his family. Old John was a personality in the town, and he was the proud possessor of the first tricycle in the district. It is a remarkable fact that two employees each served fifty years with the firm. One was David Young. Davie was a personality in the town, and he had a very pleasant disposition and was a great favourite. Many are the stories related about Davie Young. The other employee was Mr John Cowan, who is still alive. Each of these



David Young

on the site of the original Old Inn, and further down Mr Gardiner carried on a draper's business, which was augmented



Mr Simpson

by his country trade. In 1892 Messrs William Low & Co. opened their branch shop in the town in a shop later taken over by the Cowdenbeath Co-operative Society, and the first manager was Mr James Stormonth, who took a great interest in the social life of the town as a member of the Golf Club and the Reading Room at the Level Crossing. This was followed by the opening of a branch of Dick's Co-operative Society, Limited, in Gardiner's property across the street. The number of shops rapidly increased. Mr Barclay opened a shop in High Street, which was later taken over by Mr D. O. Duff from Dunfermline. Before this, Mr J. A. R. Finlay, a native of Kinross, had opened a tailor's shop next door. Mr Finlay also took a great interest in public affairs. He was a very keen sportsman—golf in the summer and curling in the winter. By this time, Mr Archibald Greig had opened an ironmonger's shop near the level crossing, while one of the early grocer's shops was a branch of Alexander's from Kirkintilloch. Long before the close of the Nineteenth century there were shops of every kind in the town and the trek to "the toon" for messages became a thing of the past. Mr T. Yule had also opened a chemist's shop, and Mr J. Moodie Brown had established a watchmaker's business in High Street. The town had always a good service of newsagents from the days of "Hairry" Younger in School Street and Mr James Westwater in Broad Street.

One of the early grocer's shops in the early 'nineties was that owned by the Beveridge Brothers, known locally as

"The Busy Bees." They were Alexander, Tom and Walter, men who did a great service in the musical and religious life of the town. By the end of the century, vacant sites in the High Street were being bought up at high prices and, in many instances, private dwellings were taken down and shops took their place. Not a little of the demand for shop accommodation was caused by the revelation in 1896 that there was a deficit of £6453 in the Co-operative Society, and it was not until June 1898 that the confidence of the members was restored, but by this time the private shop owners had had an opportunity of establishing themselves.

Until 1890 the social services had been looked after by the Fife County Council through Beath Parochial Board and the Heritors of Beath, but the rapid increase of the population demanded a much better state of affairs than existed.

DRUNK EVERY NIGHT.

One winter night, Augustine Birrell, then Member for West Fife, had occasion to come to his constituency with his legal agent. He came in a cab, and in High Street he asked his agent what place they were in. On being told it was Cowdenbeath, he remarked that if he stayed in a place like that he would get drunk every night. If Cowdenbeath appeared so bad to him through the windows of a cab, what about the position of the inhabitants who had to feel their way through muddy streets in the dark. The sidewalks were only marked off from the street by the kerb and channel, and were even in a worse condition than the main roads.

MUD AND STOOR.

There were two seasons in the year, one when there was mud and the other when there was "stoor." It was not a rare thing to see a foot passenger leave behind him or her a shoe on the sidewalk and had to hop back to retrieve it or wait until some kindly disposed person retrieved it.

Shops and houses, churches and halls, were lit by paraffin lamps, and moonlight came as a welcome blessing, for at other times the primitive lighting only

made the darkness visible. It was a stay-at-home village to a very large extent, for there was no train from Dunfermline after nine o'clock.

PENNY READINGS, ADMISSION 6D.

The inhabitants had to cater for their own amusement for a long time after the formation of the Burgh. In the 'seventies and 'eighties Gardiner's Hall proved an attraction for a few. The hall, situated behind the present shop occupied by Harrison, Tailors, was a very small building erected by Mr Gardiner, a draper, but it had to be large enough for the annual "balls," and not only did the small building accommodate the dancers, but provided room for the fiddler and even a small place set aside for refreshments. Then on Saturday nights the hall was used for the weekly "Penny Readings," when local singers and concert parties from Dunfermline supplied the programme. The price of admission to the Penny Readings was sixpence. There were several men who took turns to act as chairman, including the Rev. Mr Hogg, his successor, the Rev. A. C. McPhail of Beath Church, the Rev. Mr Johnman and the Rev. Mr Anderson of the Free Church, the first church in the town situated in Factory Road. On one occasion a local comedian was singing a song about Noah when the chairman, a minister, intervened, saying that he respected Noah too much to allow him to be the subject of a comic song at a concert over which he presided. Among those who took part in the Readings were different members of the Davidson family, Mr George Terris, Miss Paul and Mr John Beattie. Later, Mr John Brunton built Brunton's Hall, and the town had visits from travelling concert and theatrical companies. Among these were Maggie Morton's Concert Company and Rushbury's Company, with the evergreen "Alone in London."

Periodically a "Geggy" or portable theatre came to the North End of the Town and had a run of several months. Among these were Pierce and Bolton, J. Bell, and lastly, J. Fyffe, whose son, Will, often figured as an actor, but always in the laughable farce which concluded each night's entertainment. The prices of admission were threepence and sixpence.

Will Fyffe, the well-known character comedian, often pays a visit to the town to renew the friendships he made in his boyhood days. Among those friends stand out Mr and Mrs Alexander Campbell of the Commercial Hotel.



Bailie Duncan.

EARLY CINEMA.

The last portable theatre at the North End was a cinema belonging to Mr John Slora, whose sons now own the Arcade Cinema. In the days long before the "Talkies," Mr Slora had his own stage effects, such as the galloping of horses, a strong wind, or thunder, which were supplied from the side very dramatically by Mr Slora, who later rose to the position of Bailie of the town. Mr Slora was the gentleman who brought the cinema to stay at Cowdenbeath. In 1892 the Co-operative Hall was built, and soon after that the Arcade Hall was erected. Yearly concerts were organised by Mr Andrew Lindsay, headmaster Cowdenbeath School, the Choral Union, Cowdenbeath Minstrels and the Reading Room.

In the late 'eighties the North British Railway Company commenced to lay down the Perth Railway and Cowdenbeath had a large increase of workmen of the navy type, and this introduced the "model" lodging-houses into the town and the "navvy" remained where

there was plenty of work for them in the development of the town. The railway was completed in 1889, and the memorial stone in the bridge over High Street was laid with Masonic honours in April of that year by Mr Archibald Hodge. That stone is to be seen to-day, and though it is in a prominent place in the bridge, very few know of its existence. A few years later the branch railway from Cowdenbeath to Kirkcaldy was made. It took several years to complete, and it provided work for the navvies who had made Cowdenbeath their headquarters.

BEATH PAROCHIAL BOARD.

By this time, however, Cowdenbeath had been formed into a Burgh. In the Autumn of 1890 Beath Parochial Board, who looked after such things as water and a few minor services in the town, had been perturbed about the lack of social services in the village, which had now a population of over three thousand. They met in the house of Mr John McArthur, butcher. They met in his best room, and not only did John give them the room, but generally at the close of each meeting he supplied the refreshments that gave the meetings a social atmosphere. Among those who met there were Mr Mungall, Mr Barclay, Mr Fortune, Mr Paul, Mr Laing and Mr Innes. John himself did not take part in these meetings as he knew his own weakness, that of being a "contar" man, and he might have interrupted the business too often. However, his contrariness was merely superficial, for he was known to have a very kindly and generous nature though always looked upon by those who knew him to be very strict in discipline and an upholder of respect to the older generation and those in authority.

The members of the Board resolved that the time had come to form Cowdenbeath into a Burgh. John immediately opposed the proposal. Of course, no one was surprised at his opposition, for which he later gave reasons, but when the petition to be presented to the Sheriff asking for the change over to a town council was posted in the colliery office window, John's name was first on the list of petitioners. He was chaffed about his change of front, but his com-

panions knew that Mr Mungall had coaxed him over.



John McArthur.

John had no wish for public life, and though he allowed his name to go forward as a candidate at the first election he took every opportunity to advise the electors to vote for better men than he was. It was not surprising, therefore, that he was not returned as successful. Neither was the non-return of Mr Archibald Hodge a surprise. The latter made very few public speeches, but one is handed down as a typical example of the man. It was an election address and was as follows:—"Well, if ye pit me in I'll be pleased, but if ye dinna want me and dinna pit me in I'll be better pleased."

PETITION FOR TOWN COUNCIL.

There was little difficulty in getting the Town Council formed. The petition was first heard by the Sheriff at Cupar and then at Cowdenbeath (which name had been chosen in preference to Foul-

ford), and was proved to be a "populous place with more than seven hundred inhabitants." Then in Brunton's Hall on 24th November, 1890, in the presence of Sheriff Gillespie it was agreed to form the Town Council with nine members. Michael Reilly testified that he had delivered the bills calling the meeting, and copies of the "Dunfermline Press" and "Dunfermline Journal"

with the advertisements calling the meeting were produced. The first election took place in Brunton's Hall and there were twenty-two candidates, and the successful ones were:—Henry Mungall, 244; James Laing, 204; Andrew Wilson, 177; Robert Ferguson, 171; James Innes, 158; Charles Barclay, 143; David Anderson, 139; James Fortune, 136; and John Paul, 129.



First Town Council.



George Terris.

TOWN COUNCIL FORMED.

The Council met for the first time on 15th January 1891, and after they appointed Mr Mungall as Provost, Messrs James Laing and James Fortune as Bailies. Mr George Terris was appointed Clerk and the meeting was adjourned.

PROVOSTS AND TERMS OF OFFICE.

Mr Mungall continued to be Provost of the Burgh until 1902. Mr Mungall was followed by the following gentlemen as Provosts:—

Mr James Laing	1902-1905.
Mr Andrew Wilson	1905-1908.
Mr Charles Barclay	1908-1911.
Mr Robert Marshall... ..	1911-1914.
Mr David Keir	1914-1917.
Mr George Penman	1917-1920.
Mr James Russell	1920-1927.
Mr Thomas Blamey	1927-1930.
Mr John King... ..	1930-1933.
Mr D. E. Walker	1933-1936.
Dr J. B. Primmer... ..	1936-1939.
Mr John Young	1939-

HONOURS TO GO ROUND.

In the early years of his membership of the Council, a motion was submitted by Mr David Keir and carried, to the effect that municipal honours should go round, and it will be seen that, after Mr Mungall, no Provost, with the exception of Mr James Russell—who held office for seven years—occupied the chair for more than three years.

COWDENBEATH PROVOSTS.



Provost Marshall.

The Provosts were drawn from all classes of the community. Mr Henry Mungall was chairman of the Cowdenbeath Coal Company and afterwards of the Fife Coal Company, and was largely responsible for the initial development of the coalfield in the West of Fife. Mr James Laing was originally a colliery surface worker and subsequently conducted a grocer's business in High Street. Mr Andrew Wilson was a successful builder and contractor, and was responsible for the erection of a very large number of buildings in the Burgh and neighbourhood. Mr Charles Barclay carried on a successful joiner's business in the Burgh. Mr John Marshall was originally a railway signalman and afterwards became Secretary of Cowdenbeath Co-operative Society. Mr

David Keir for many years conducted a successful boot and shoe business in the Burgh. Mr George Penman was originally a miner and subsequently became the proprietor of the Masonic Arms public-house, where he conducted a large business for many years. Mr James Russell was a miner and took a great interest in everything concerned with the welfare of the mining community. He was a lifelong abstainer and took an active and keen interest in temperance work throughout his life. Mr Thomas Blamey was also a miner. For



Provost Keir.

some time he was chairman of the Fife, Clackmannan and Kinross Miners' Union, and from his early years has taken a very active interest in industrial and social matters. He has been Convener of the Public Health Committee of Fife County Council since the passing of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1929. Mr John King was a checkweighman and was for many years chairman of the Board of Management of Cowdenbeath Co-operative Society, and did much for the success of that Society. Mr David E. Walker is a fruiterer and confectioner, and has conducted a successful business in the Burgh for many years. Dr John B. Primmer conducted a large medical practice in the Burgh since 1902, and retired from active practice in 1939. Dr



Provost King.



Provost Russell.

Primmer is a son of the Rev. Jacob Primmer of Townhill, whose Conventicles were so well known throughout the country during the end of last century. Provost Young was originally connected with the farming industry, but since he came to Cowdenbeath many years ago has been associated in a number of business enterprises in the Burgh.

The first meeting of the Town Council was held in Thomson's Hall, which was on the site of the present Co-operative Society's premises in High Street.

RATES THREEPENCE PER POUND.

The first business was the discussion about assessments to pay for the cost of the election and other estimated expenditure for the current half-year. The assessment agreed upon was 3d in the £, as this was expected to bring the sum of £90.

Mr Terris was also appointed Collector with a commission of 3½%, and Mr Fortune was appointed Honorary Treasurer. At a later meeting the salary of the Town Clerk with his many other duties was fixed at £15 per year.

TOWN POO BAH.

The Council must have been financially minded, for they right away enquired about a Police Court and what cases could be tried there. First they had to get a Fiscal, and they got the services of that very handy man, the school janitor, Campbell Halkett, who took on this work along with his many other duties. Later, the Council got Mr Halkett to take on the position of Sanitary Inspector as well. For this job he

was given £2 per year, with a special financial inducement to get prosecutions in connection with the Sanitary Laws. The fines for the month of April 1891 amounted to £4:5/-.

The Commissioners appointed a scavenger, but discovering that they could not hire a horse and cart for the whole week they hired them for two days in each week.

They were a very observant body. For instance, they reported a Police Officer—very likely the only one—to the Chief Constable for neglect of duty, and graciously recommended, when the Chief Constable had found him guilty, that nothing further be done. Then they had to call upon their Sanitary Inspector to tell him that they expected periodical reports for the sum they were paying him. They then agreed to tell proprietors to remove the "filth" from the front of their houses and told householders that they must not throw "filthy" water on the street.

The newly formed Town Council were not long in being aware of the tremendous task they had taken in hand to put the village into "a decent state of repair" to bring it up to the standard one naturally expects from a burgh. They were faced with the very poor housing conditions and the almost lack of social services. Being a purely mining village, the houses were to a very large extent built in "miners' raws," and a very large number of the inhabitants of to-day need not be reminded of the very poor facilities for comfort they provided. In most instances they were of the "but and ben" order, with one door. In many instances, too, they had stone floors

which, in the present days, makes one almost shudder at the thought of it. The only outside sanitary convenience was a dry "closet," which served for several families. There was no coal house, and the coal had to be placed below one of the kitchen beds, and room had to be left for the small keg of gun powder—the only explosive used in connection with the miners work, and which he had to purchase from his scanty earnings. Water had to be drawn from the street well and stored in two pails in a recess in the wall between the outside and inside doors—a very convenient place for the cats and dogs to satiate their thirst. There was very little incentive for cleanliness. A bathroom was unthought of, and in below a bed reposed the family wash tub, which was brought out daily after "the men" had their dinner, and there, in the middle of the kitchen floor, the miners washed themselves to their own discomfort and that of the whole household. The mess that was the result of the daily wash had to be cleaned up, and then followed the laying out to dry in front of the kitchen fire of the miners' wet clothes, so that they would be in a condition to wear for the next day's work. One can very well understand the lack of comforts under these conditions if there were more than one miner in the house, and especially if they were on different shifts. The children of the miners were brought up under these conditions, and one cannot be surprised to hear that many of the miners sought the comfort of the local public-house when their scanty pays afforded this way of forgetting their troubles. On the other side of the domestic affairs, one must have had great sympathy with the miners' wives, especially when one takes into consideration that miners' families generally averaged five, and there were very often ten and over. Conditions were bad under normal circumstances, which meant that in a miner's but and ben there had to be four beds, and the family were fortunate if no bed in the house had to accommodate more than two. One can well imagine what happened when sickness invaded the home or, worse still, when a fatal accident brought grief and mourning into the house. The present generation must feel horrified to be told on very many occasions the dead body of a

miner lying in his coffin had to be removed from a bed at night to allow the inmates the use of the bed. While this state of affairs not only existed at Cowdenbeath but in every mining district in Fife, it gives an indication of what Cowdenbeath Town Council had to face.

One regrettable feature was that it was understood that this was the conditions set down for the miners, and anything more comfortable would be looked upon as revolutionary and unheard of. This idea seemed to possess the members of the Town Council in these days, and several years afterwards, when the first Labour Councillor was returned to the Council by co-option, he made a motion that the Coal Company be forced to install a water closet to each four tenants in their property in High Street. The Provost, who was chairman of the Company, got very annoyed over the proposal. He stated that that would ruin the Coal Company and, after all, it would be such a waste of good water. His expression of that opinion no doubt went a long way towards the result of the vote, which was that two voted in favour of the motion. When that Councillor retired at the end of the next year he was defeated and graced the bottom of the poll. The ca' canny policy was having its effect in these days.

By this time, however, the private builder was making his presence felt in the town, and many "taen" houses had water closets introduced. Baths, however, were only confined to a few lucky families, and it was not until the adoption of the Town Council Housing Schemes that a bath was not considered a luxury.

Another problem that faced them was the sewage question. When they took office there were no sewage works at all. The drains emptied themselves into the stream that runs through the centre of the town and eventually enters Loch Gelly.

This state of affairs could not last forever, for they were continually reminded by Board of Health and other interested parties, especially the ground proprietors on the banks of the stream. They put off the evil day for many years, until at last they had no alternative but take the matter in hand. Sewage works had to be put down and,

on the assurance of a well-known mining man (a member of the Town Council), that the place they had selected was a safe site, the plant was laid down. Changes in the officials of the Coal Company were effected a short time afterwards, and the verbal assurances that the coal would never be wrought below that site proved worthless. The plant began to break up from the effect of underground workings there, and soon the Town Council were left with the relics of their costly plant.

This was a great blow to the community, as while the sewage works were a complete wreck, the Council were still paying interest on borrowed capital and repaying instalments on the loan of the principal amount, and did so until recently, and the sewage again had to be diverted in its crude state to Lochgelly Loch. They simply could not face the additional expenditure for new sewage works, and, despite the constant reminders and claims for damages, they again put off the evil day until several years ago, when the present new plant was laid down. This time they made no mistake about the safety of the site, but bought out the coal underneath. They then very wisely took other precautions, including the laying down of a plant that could deal with double the sewage that passes through it, and thus provided for any large increase in the population. As the plant was to last for many years, the Town Council were determined to have the very latest, and it was only after visiting the very latest types that they decided to adopt the most recent—that of the activated sludge principle which had then been introduced in Scotland and was only in operation at one place and had been proved to be a great success. Work was commenced as soon as possible, and the plant was opened in October 1932.

A BURNING QUESTION.

A few years after the formation of the Town Council a new problem arose, namely, the question of a domestic water supply, which was brought about by the rapid increase of the population.

Long before the burgh was formed, the only water supply was from springs. One such spring was at the North End of the High Street, and it was from this spring that the inhabitants over a large

area had to take their water, and this provided domestic duties for the younger members of the families. Beath Parochial Board tackled the question of a water supply by pipes throughout the main streets from a source in the present Public Park, and a water house was erected—a building that is now used as a tool house. There was an opening ceremony, at which a few men still alive were present, when, they remember, it was stated that they had got a supply sufficient for their needs. Alas! that did not even prove sufficient for the needs of the village during the life-time of the Parochial Board, and in 1887 the present Roscobie site was acquired and a reservoir laid out there, when it was again thought the village was provided for for all time.

When the Town Council took office in 1890 there was no need to doubt that statement, and surplus water was supplied to the village of Hill of Beath. However, so rapidly did the population increase that, before the end of the century, it was found necessary to enlarge the reservoir at Roscobie. This was completed in 1901, and again the forecast was made that Cowdenbeath had enough water for all time.

Again that proved to be wrong, for not many years had elapsed when the water scarcity arose again, and the supply from Roscobie had to be augmented by water taken from Dalbeath Pit. Though this supply was helpful, the water was very hard and unsuitable for washing purposes, and the housewives complained bitterly. At one period of acute scarcity it is recorded that Dr Craig, who was then Medical Officer of Health, had actually used a bottle of lemonade one morning to wash his face.

The solution of the problem came in sight when, in 1911, the Town Council purchased from Dunfermline District Committee of Fife County Council their limited right to take water from Loch Glow. The Town Council then set negotiations on foot for the complete control by them of the water rights in the Loch, but these negotiations were protracted over several years. In 1918 the Town Council promoted a Provisional Order to secure complete control of the water in the Loch. This was strongly opposed by landowners in the vicinity of the Loch and by mill owners.

on the banks of the River Leven. The Town Council, under the able guidance of Mr R. T. Milne, Town Clerk, put up a very strong case and were in every way successful in carrying through the Order. Since that time there has been an abundant supply of water, and there is sufficient reserve in the Loch to meet with all demands likely to arise for many years to come.



Mr Milne.

There were other questions to be tackled that meant large outlays and borrowing of large sums. There was the lighting of the town. Previous to the formation of the Burgh the High Street was lit by a few paraffin lamps, which were provided, equipped and maintained by voluntary means, principal being the financial returns from the Penny Readings. This fund was administered by a small committee of whom Mr Hodge was secretary, treasurer and supervisor.

Then Cowdenbeath Gas Company was formed, of which more is told later in this history of the Burgh, and Cowdenbeath Town Council were quite pleased to allow that body to light their main streets. When it is remembered that the population of the Burgh when it was formed was only approximately 3000, and when the principal election cry was "Economy," one is not surprised to

know that several schemes were delayed as long as possible. These included the building of a slaughterhouse, the erection of new Council Chambers, street making, general road repair and pavement laying. The last-mentioned came as a great boon, and there is no doubt that this greatly enhanced the popularity of Cowdenbeath as a centre, and the shopkeepers reaped the benefit. By this time the ratepayers had fully realised that the early years following the formation of a Burgh were years of great outlay, but here at Cowdenbeath there was the redeeming feature that the town was growing by leaps and bounds and the increased rental kept taxation within reasonable bounds. Encouraged by this, the Town Council commenced to make up leeway in the matters that were behind in the way of social services.

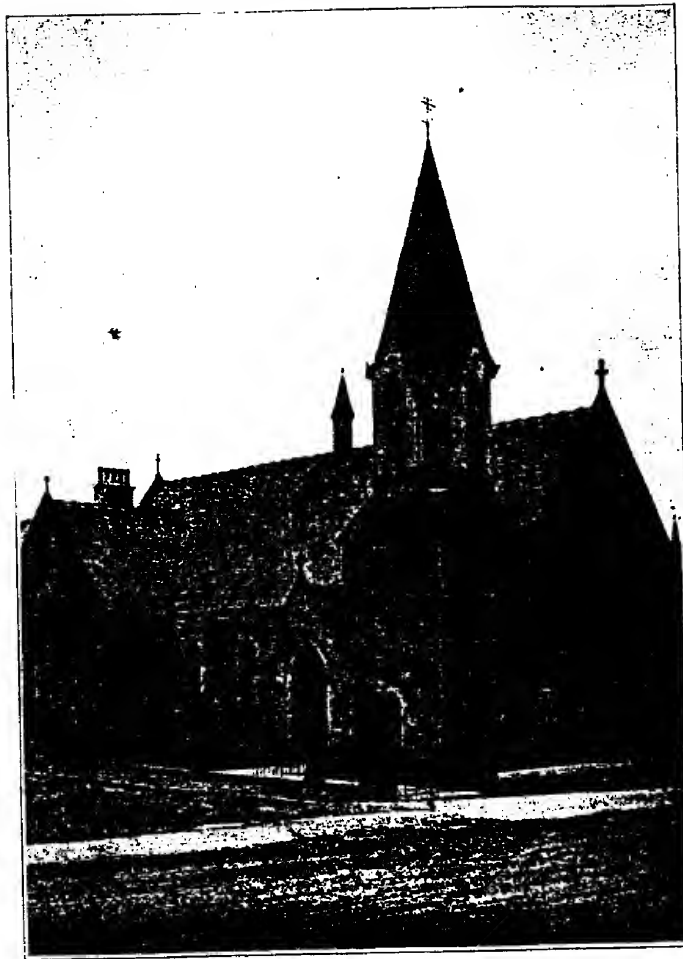
Cowdenbeath 50 Years Ago

CHICAGO OF FIFE.

A great deal of progress was made in the Nineties, during which time Bailie Laing at a public meeting referred to the town as the Chicago of Fife, so rapidly was it extending. Streets must have greatly improved, too, for he stated that the High Street was beginning to resemble Princes Street, Edinburgh. This caused a great laugh in the hall. Still, in time, High Street was put right with granolithic pavement. More visitors began to arrive in the town from the country to have the pleasure of walking on our pavement, which was something of a treat.

CHURCHES ERECTED.

Two other churches came into existence—the Guthrie Church in High Street and the Cairns U.P. Church in Church Street. A few years later a Chapel of Ease was erected in Natal Place. This church was constituted as a Quod Sacra Church, and is now the West Parish Church.



West Parish Church.

MORE COAL PITS.

With the sinking of Mossbeath Pit, houses began to appear in Broad Street, Moss-side Road, Chapel Street and Park Avenue, and the population rose to over ten thousand. The Raith Pits continued to send out large supplies of coal, as did the "evergreen" No. 7 Pit in the centre of the Burgh. The Gordon Pit was sunk, and Foulford Pit output was supplemented by the sinking of No. 9 Pit.

RISE IN LICENSED PREMISES.

With the rapid rise in the population, and the growing popularity of Cowdenbeath as a centre, there was a great rush for public-house premises. The Old Inn was soon joined by the Commercial Hotel (Mr A. Campbell), the Crown Hotel (Mr T. Bernard), Foulford Arms

(Mr Mitchell), Raith Arms (Mr Goldie Kerr, who later became a Town Councillor), and The Vaults, owned for a long time by Mr Nicol, were taken over by Mr George Penman, who subsequently became Provost of the Burgh. He greatly extended the premises and called them the Masonic Arms. At every Licensing Court there were continual heated arguments between Dunfermline lawyers and ministers of religion for and against the licences. Mr A. Shand got a licence for the present Gothenburg premises, and many were refused.

STREET LIGHTING.

The lighting of the town was still in a backward state. Paraffin lamps were discarded for coal gas, then followed carbide gas, which was sold at a prohibitive price. The first to try gas was

Mr Alexander, a grocer in High Street, who fitted up a small plant in his back-shop, and thus lit up his own shop and a street lamp which he placed on the edge of the pavement. Matters in the way of lighting got worse when a small privately-owned gas plant at the rear of High Street was the scene of an explosion. The present Cowdenbeath Gas Company took the matter in hand, and they have ever since looked after the manufacture of gas for the town.

The Town Council missed a grand chance at that time to take over that plant. It is stated on good authority that at a Council Meeting a proposal to buy the privately-owned gas plant was rejected, in the belief that the Police Commissioners would eventually get the plant for nothing. However, Cowdenbeath Gas Company carried on, and the chance was lost.

Later, Cowdenbeath Town Council put down an electric lighting plant of their own for street lighting purposes, and when Provost Mungall pulled down a switch, saying, "let there be light," the dismal street lighting was a thing of the past.

NEW STREETS FOLLOW PROSPERITY.

With the twentieth century the population increased, and Stenhouse Street took shape with many other side streets. Foulford School and Beath R.C. Primary were erected. At the same time there also sprung up a large number of other churches of the Plymouth Brethren type known as Church of God, Church of Christ, Close Brethren, Open Brethren, etc., who occupied various halls in the town, and they all exist to this day.

OVERCROWDING.

The Town Council were faced with many other problems. The rising population demanded much in the way of improvement of social and other services. In 1911, when the population was at its highest, overcrowding had for some years been presenting the Council with a serious problem. Some idea of the extent of overcrowding may be realised when it is stated that the Town Council have erected more than 720 new houses, it is estimated that three or four hundred more are still required, and that the population is now about 2000 less than it was about thirty years ago.

HOUSING SCHEME DISCUSSED IN 1914.

Just before the commencement of the Great War in 1914 the Town Council had a scheme for the building of municipal houses which was strongly sponsored by Bailie Blamey, but the War put an end to the project for the time being. In 1919, however, the Council commenced to tackle the housing problem, and they have now erected 720 new houses and have plans in hand for the erection of several hundreds more.

FUTURE FOR THE TOWN.

There is a future for Cowdenbeath, and that is because it has become the centre of the mining industry of West Fife.

The Fife Coal Company helped considerably when they made Cowdenbeath their headquarters, providing employment for several hundred additional workers.



Mr J. Paton, Workshops Manager.



Winners of Summer League.



Interior View of Central Workshop

It is also an educational centre, having within its boundaries Beath Secondary School, the Fife Mining School and Beath R.C. High School, which last serves the whole of Fife. Had the town been able to have induced the Fife Miners' Union to have made Cowdenbeath their headquarters it would certainly have strengthened the strong claim of Cowdenbeath to be the hub of the West Fife coal trade.

DARK DAYS.

Cowdenbeath, like other towns, has had its critical periods. The black period of the Great War had just passed when the mining counties were upset by industrial dispute commencing with the prolonged miners' strike of 1921. Cowdenbeath, being the centre of the West Fife mining industry, was soon in the throes of the struggle. The beginning of the struggle was associated with regrettable scenes in the town, no doubt exaggerated as they were carried to different parts of the country, and then followed month of privation when many families lost their savings which of this dispute were still having their took them years to collect. The result of this dispute was still having its effect on the municipal life of the town when along came the protracted strike of 1926, and the inhabitants, most of whom are miners, had to undergo another long spell of endurance that considerably hampered the work of the Town Council. These unfortunate industrial disputes seriously affected the civic life of the town, as it did the whole of the coal industry of the country, but Cowdenbeath has passed through its

critical period and there are bright days ahead. The time must come when the town will receive its rightful share of the heavy industries, which the coal industry of the district justifies, and which the Government have to a very large extent, if not altogether, neglected or withheld. With the abolition of overcrowding and the gradual reduction of the burden of loans, we will have a town which will stand as a monument to our legislators and our private citizens, who have sacrificed so much for its prosperity.

NEW COUNCIL CHAMBERS.

Up to the end of last century the Council Chambers had been in Waverley Rooms in School Street, but in 1902 the present spacious premises in High Street were opened.

Among the public and private bodies and organisations which have carried on social and other work in the Burgh, mention may be made of the following:—

BEATH PARISH COUNCIL.

In parochial affairs Beath Parish Council has always played a prominent part in the history of Cowdenbeath. After the passing of the Poor Law Act the relief of the poor was entrusted to the Parochial Board, and in October 1845 we find Mr John Currer of Nether-town was appointed the first Inspector of Poor for the Parish of Beath at a salary of £7 per annum. For that he had to distribute relief to the poor of the Parish and keep a correct account of all sums paid and disbursed by him. He had an-

extra £2 per year as collector of assessments. It was fortunate that there were no buses in these days or he would have been out of pocket in travelling expenses in connection with these duties. He only performed these duties for one year, however, as he died in 1846, and his son, Peter Curror, was appointed to take up his father's work. At the end of another year, however, Mr Thomas Scott, who was Parochial Schoolmaster at Caritsdam, Kelty, was appointed to the position. Mr Scott was also appointed Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths. In 1857 the position of Inspector of Poor was given to Mr James Brand, a teacher in Cowdenbeath Colliery School. That gentleman must have been held in high esteem in the Parish for we find that when he left to take up the position of Inspector of Poor at Abbotshall, Kirkcaldy, in 1865, there was a special reference to his good work in the Minutes. It refers to his efficiency as Inspector of Poor and to his courteous treatment to that class of people "who will be ever with us." There were three candidates for the vacant position. One was Mr James Terris, father of the late Town Clerk and Parish Clerk, and he received more votes than the other two candidates combined. The salary was now £30 per annum. With the new appointment there was a change not enjoyed by the Cowdenbeath poor, for they now had to travel to Oakfield, Kelty, to get their relief. An old Cowdenbeath lady, who died quite recently, related how she had to walk there and back every week for 3/6 per week which she received after her husband had been killed in a colliery accident at Cowdenbeath.

Other Inspectors of Poor since then have been Mr George Terris, Mr James Terris, his son, and the present in office, Mr Alexander Baxter.

As a Parish Council Beath has had a hectic career. From the days of very meagre allowances to the poor there was a gradual inclination to pay much better rates. The standard rates laid down by the supervising Authority were never high enough to please the members of the Parochial Board and the Parish Council, and there was always trouble between the Council and the supervising Authority. The Council allowances were never below the scales

set down, and on many occasions they exceeded them, and there were repeatedly threats to surcharge the members. This threat did not strike fear into the hearts of the members and they successfully defied the supervising Authority. Beath Parish Council came into prominence as being one of the most liberal Parish Councils in Scotland in the treatment of the poor. The Parochial Board and the Parish Councils are now relics of the past and their functions are performed by the Public Assistance Committee of the County Council.

Education

TWO SCHOOLS.

In the early days of Cowdenbeath there were two schools set up by the Colliery owners. One was that belonging to the Lochgelly Iron & Coal Company, and was specially erected for the education of the children of their workmen employed at Raith Colliery. That school was made by the taking away of walls between two of the five houses in School Row, situated just outside the present Burgh boundary. In this building Mr Geddes looked after the education of the boys, and in an extra room erected at the rear Miss Syme, from Lochgelly, looked after the education of the girls. Miss Syme had often the assistance of her sister from Lochgelly, and though only the three R's were supposed to be taught, the unpaid services of the younger Miss Syme were often used to teach the young girls sewing. The other school for the Cowdenbeath children was situated in Broad Street, almost exactly opposite the present Broad Street School. This, too, consisted of two houses, a but-and-ben, made into one. Here the teacher was Mr David Dundas Brown, and no doubt the school was commenced by the Oakley Iron & Coal Company, though the schools were known respectively as the Raith School and Cowdenbeath School.

EDUCATION 1/2 PER WEEK.

The schools were not confined to the children of colliery workers, as children of other workers and of the few shop-owners were admitted to either school, but every Monday morning each one in

this category had to bring along one shilling and twopence. Quite a number of the oldest persons in the town got their education in one of these two schools.

BROAD STREET SCHOOL.

This state of affairs existed until 1876 when the newly appointed School Board took over the education of the children and were responsible for the erection of the first part of the present Broad Street School. A year previous to the change over Mr Geddes had left the Raith School, and Mr John Craigie, a certificated teacher, succeeded him, and came to the new school with his pupils on February 14th, 1876. The infant department under Miss Syme came as a separate school and remained a separate school until the retirement of Miss Syme in 1903. At the same time, the children from the Cowdenbeath School went to the new building, but there is no record of what happened to their teacher, Mr David Dundas Brown. On the day the school was opened there were two members of the School Board present, Dr Mungall, a colliery doctor, and his brother, Henry Mungall, afterwards Provost of the Burgh. The next day the school was examined by a school inspector, Mr Hugh Wilson. In Mr Craigie's department the assistant was Mr McDougal, while there were three pupil teachers, John Miller, James Paul and Christina Danks. The pupils appeared to number 121 and were taught in two rooms. John Miller was the son of Mr Miller, the builder, and James Paul was the son of the late Mr John Paul, plasterer. In April of the next year Mr Craigie received the appointment of Government Inspector of Schools, and the new headmaster was Mr Andrew Lindsay, who had been assistant to Mr Scott of the Parochial School at Cantsdam. Mr Lindsay retired in 1911, having completed thirty-four years as headmaster. The number of scholars when he retired was over 1400 and the school had been twice enlarged. It was enlarged again after a disastrous fire of 1929, when nearly all the school was destroyed, giving the school motto, "Little by little," a double meaning. Mr Allan was headmaster until 1913, when the present headmaster, Mr Wm. M. Fortune, a pupil of

the school, was appointed headmaster.

When Miss Syme took over the Infant Department of the new school she had also over a hundred pupils under her charge. She had, as assistant, Miss Watters, with Miss Cooper as sewing mistress. A few months later Miss Annie Penman was appointed as an assistant. The first School Exhibition was held in 1876, and among the relics treasured by a Cowdenbeath old lady is a book won as a prize for sewing and cutting out a shape. Miss Syme retired in June, 1903, and her successor, Miss Jude, commenced duties, but not as a headmistress in charge of an infant school but headmistress of the infant department under Mr Lindsay. Other headmistresses who have been in the school are Miss Jamieson, Miss Menzies and the present Miss Forbes. A teacher with a very long record of service, now retired, is Miss Currall.

Foulford School was erected to cope with the large increase in the school population, and this was followed soon afterwards by the R.C. Primary School. The passing of the Education Act, 1910, was responsible for the erection of Beath Secondary School and, before the war, there was a demand for a school at Moss-side, but the building was delayed until after the end of the war. The erection of the R.C. High School came



Jenny Lee



Mr J. M. Masterton, a prominent educationist and Secretary of the Earl Haig Fund Committee.

later, and the conversion of Moss-side School into a post-qualifying centre for girls was made a few years ago.

FREE BOOKS INTRODUCED.

Previous to the abolition of Beath School Board in 1919 that Board aroused considerable local and national interest by the adoption of the principle of "free books" in 1911, and later they commended a school for "backward" children, known as a Special School, in 1916. The schools in the area are now under the control of the Education Committee of Fife County Council. During the School Board days a prominent chairman was Mr James Terris of Dullomuir, Blairadam, and commemoration tablets to his memory are in Beath Secondary School and the Public School at Kelty.

FIFE MINING SCHOOL AND DR PARKER.

The Fife Mining School, which stands on Broad Street and Moss-side Road, is a monument to the work of Principal Joseph Parker, D.Sc. Born of humble parents in the West of Scotland, he left the day school at 12 years of age to work in the mines, but later he commenced to study at Hamilton Academy while working during the day, and overcoming all obstacles he gained his colliery

manager's certificate at the age of 26. He was manager at Allenton Colliery, and then came to Fife to be the manager of Cardenden Colliery. It was then he had his first acquaintance with the Fife Mining School, Cowdenbeath, which, at the time, only occupied two rooms in Broad Street School.

Still anxious for more learning, he attended Dunfermline High School, where he gained his Higher Leaving Certificate, and then he took courses at the Heriot-Watt College and Edinburgh University. During this time he continued as a teacher at the Fife Mining School, a student during the day and a teacher in the evening. At last he realised his great ambition when he became Principal of the Fife Mining School. Pressing for more accommodation, he got the school transferred to



Dr Parker

the basement of Beath Secondary School. Still he was not satisfied, and again putting forward the claims of the school he was successful in having the present commodious school erected.

Mine ventilation was his pet subject, because he fully realised the great danger to miners employed in mines where different kinds of gases are encountered. He studied this subject rigorously and when he had mastered it he submitted a thesis to the University of Edinburgh and was awarded the Degree of Doctor of Science. This, as can be seen, is not a mere empty title, because the subject was closely allied to his work, but Mr Parker set little importance on the designation of Doctor. He looked upon as his greatest reward the knowledge that he had done something

in the interest of that huge body of men who take their lives in their hands when they go to work in a coal mine, and whose service to the community and the country he keenly appreciated.

A very large number of his pupils occupy prominent positions in the mining world to-day.

During the Great War the strong appeal for the training of girls and young women as munition workers found a ready response in Principal Parker, and after months of sweeping aside the obstructions of officialdom he collected as much machinery as would enable him to make a start. With no thought of monetary reward he commenced the training of the girls, who gradually were fully trained and were accepted in munition works all over the country.

He also turned his attention to the formation of a company of the Mechanical Transport Section of the Army Service Corps. He got his recruits from his students, and after borrowing and buying old cars he set to work to instruct the students in the driving and repair of motor cars.

He was again very successful, and at last a complete company of trained men were accepted by the military authorities and were sent to the headquarters in London.

As a mining lecturer he was always in great demand. His passing in October 1939 was a great loss to the community.

AMBULANCE WAGGON ASSOCIATION.

One public body which has performed very useful work to the community is Cowdenbeath Ambulance Waggon Association. In the early days of coal mining one very regrettable feature was the absence of a suitable vehicle for the transport of the sick and injured. This was particularly so on the occasion of a miner being injured at work, when a cart was the only means of having him conveyed home, rough travelling being only mitigated to a very small extent by a layer of straw. This state of affairs came to an end in 1903 when the Cowdenbeath Public House Society Limited presented the town with a horse-drawn ambulance. About this time also the Fife Coal Company introduced a better



John W. Beveridge

system for the removal of injured miners. The lighting of the public ambulance was by means of batteries, which were so heavy that there was always a danger of the vehicle getting out of control on the Halbeath Hill, and the route taken to and from Dunfermline Hospital was by Dhuloch. This vehicle served for eighteen years. Mr David Arthur was first secretary of the Ambulance Waggon Association formed on the presentation of the waggon, and Mr James Innes, who followed him in that capacity nine years later, served for twelve years. The first motor ambulance waggon was presented to the Association after the War. It came as a gift from the Ex-Service Men, each of whom could direct the sum of five shillings to any object they liked from the accumulated profits of the war canteen fund. A local gentleman prepared sheets for signature and was responsible for them being signed by the Ex-Service Men, asking that their respective five shillings should be given to a fund for the purchase of the ambulance. The formal presentation was made by Principal Joseph Parker of the Fife Mining School, and it was accepted by the present secretary, Mr John Beveridge. This machine outlived its usefulness and another was purchased at the cost of

£546, of which cost the Miners' Welfare Fund contributed £250. The work of the ambulance waggon has greatly increased since the days of the horse-drawn vehicle. In the last year of that vehicle 55 cases were attended to, 4 of which were taken to Edinburgh Infirmary. During the last financial year 1346 cases were attended to, and there were 187 journeys to Edinburgh. As the work increased so also has the income increased and, while the income in 1915 was £86:15:0, last year it was £862:9:3.

The present secretary, Mr J. W. Beveridge, has held that post since 1921, and during his long term of office he has performed a faithful service to the town. The duties of the office have been numerous and at times very trying, but he has unflinchingly carried on, earning the appreciation and esteem of the town and the often silent thanks of a large section of the community who were unfortunate enough to require the use of the ambulance. Like his Committee, he has always observed a progressive policy which has exceeded the hopes of the founders.

Two other persons deserve words of gratitude for their part in the work of the Ambulance Waggon Association: Mr Archibald Hodge, treasurer for twenty years, and Miss Hodge, treasurer for nine years. Miss Hodge was persuaded to accept an illuminated address on her retiral, and Mr Hodge unwillingly accepted a piece of silver plate, suitably inscribed.

The Association now own their own garage, board room and office.

COWDENBEATH GAS COMPANY, LIMITED.

There are two of the social services of the town which impress as being of a very satisfactory standard, namely, lighting and the water supply. In connection with the former the history of street lighting has been remarkable. Before the formation of the Burgh, and for the first few years after, street lighting was of a primitive nature and, in fact, when it was introduced it was carried out on a voluntary basis, and the village had to depend on the musical abilities and generosity of a few persons to provide the lamps and keep them burning. It was gradually felt that

something should be done to get some form of lighting of the main street, and a local committee was formed to see to it. They decided on a scheme of concerts which were called Penny Readings and were held in the original Colliery School in Broad Street. The result of those weekly concerts was that a small number of lamps were obtained and these kept lighted, except on moonlight nights.

The Cowdenbeath Gas Company, Limited, was formed and registered on 7th August, 1891, the objects being:— "To supply the town of Cowdenbeath with Oil Gas, or other illuminant for lighting or other purposes; to purchase the Oil Gas Works there, and plant, pipes, etc., belonging to William Alexander, merchant, Cowdenbeath, and to extend and develop the same, as may be found expedient, and generally to carry on the businesses of Gas Manufacture and Merchants in all departments in the said town or elsewhere."

The Oil Gasworks purchased from William Alexander were situated at the bottom of the present Burgh Road, and the new Company extended the plant and main pipes and commenced a supply of Gas.

John Boswell was the first Chairman, and George Terris, Clerk to the then Police Commissioners, was appointed Secretary.

The story of the Company during the first ten years was one of faith, hope and tragedy.

Oil Gas was manufactured, and in 1894 the Cowdenbeath Police Commissioners had 12 street lamps in High Street, which were supplied at a price of 10/3d per lamp per year.

The Gas Manager received 12/- per week for his labour, later increased to 15/- per week.

It was a part-time job, as the records show that the Police Commissioners complained about his working at night and "on the Lord's Day," whereby he was considered not capable of attending to his work for them.

About 1896 the Company became agents for incandescent gas burners, and their first order was for three dozen burners and one dozen spare mantles.

Costs of production and difficulties with the plant became serious with the price of gas at 12/- per 1000 cubic feet.

About June 1898 the Company became

interested in the manufacture of Acetylene Gas in preference to Oil Gas, and it was decided upon the advice given that this new gas would enable them to regain stability and the plant was installed.

For a while it was a great success as a light and was referred to as the "light par excellence" and "the Queen of Lights." It was found, however, that the gas was costing 15/- per 1000 cubic feet to make, and out of twenty thousand feet made they lost ten thousand feet.

Difficulties with the supplies of calcium developed, and after failure of the gas supply for two days the derelict Oil Gas Plant was again brought into use.

Troubles continued, complaints about price and quality were common, and a report and plans were obtained from Hubert Pooley, Gas Manager, Dunfermline, with the object of putting down a coal gas plant. This did not develop because of the lack of further capital.

Suggestions were made that the Police Commissioners might take over the business in June, 1899, but no action was taken.

In 1900, George Terris, Secretary of the Company, wrote to himself as Clerk to the Police Commissioners (now called the Town Council) offering the Council the whole plant and rights for £500, but no action was taken.

On 20th August, 1900, an explosion and fire destroyed the plant, which was insured for £100, and the sum of £96 was accepted in settlement.

The Town Council were again asked to take over the business, and pending their consideration, other people who had greater confidence in the success of a gas supply in the town became interested, purchased the shares of the Company and set about to develop the business.

The new Directors, headed by James Hutton, gas meter manufacturer, Edinburgh, decided to manufacture coal gas and erect a complete new gasworks on a site at the east end of Elgin Road and lay new pipes throughout the town.

They appointed Mr J. B. Scott their new Engineer and Manager early in 1901, the erection of the new works was proceeded with and a supply of gas was once more made available to the town early in December, 1901.



Mr Scott.

The price of gas, the facilities offered by the Company in providing free services, the introduction of the penny slot meter, and cooking appliances on easy hire terms, afforded every householder the benefits of gas for lighting, cooking and heating. The result of this popular development was successful and progress was rapid.

In 1904 the inhabitants of Kelty made a request for the Cowdenbeath Gas Company, Limited, to extend a gas supply to Kelty district, but this proposal was not proceeded with, and ultimately Kelty interests formed a Gas Company and erected works of their own.

In 1906 the Lumphinnans Public-House Society, Limited, decided to provide street lighting in Lumphinnans village, as one form of their social betterment schemes, and the Gas Company laid main pipes through the village.

The lamps were operated by a patent apparatus from the Gasworks for several years, this being the first installation of its kind in Scotland.

In 1910 the Company extended its supply to the householders in Crossgates and Fordell districts.

During 1914 a high pressure supply pipe was extended from Crossgates to Aberdour.

Just previous to the Great War Cowdenbeath Town Council made a strong bid to acquire the Gas undertaking. They adopted the Gas Supply Act, but during the War the Council were not allowed to borrow money for the purpose, and this Order operated for several years afterwards. By this time the price of the undertaking had risen to a prohibitive price.

In passing it might not be out of place to record that one progressive spirit in the Town Council, speaking at a public function in the Burgh, suggested that the town should now extend its boundaries to include Aberdour, now that the Gas Company had paved the way.

Up to this time the progressive development of the Company had been rapid and had exceeded the expectations of the Directors when they set out in 1900.

During 1920-21, by arrangement with the Fife Coal Company, Limited, the Gas Company installed a Gas Supply to all their houses in Lumphinnans, Kirkford, Hill of Beath, and within the Burgh, much to the benefit of the occupants.

Progress has been maintained during the intervening years, notwithstanding the introduction of electricity as a competitor.

The Housing Schemes developed by the Town Council and County Council have been provided with a gas supply and, to meet the increasing demands, the Company's manufacturing plant has been extended from time to time, and they possess an up-to-date works capable of meeting greatly increased demands.

It may be of interest to state that the Gas Company are one of the largest ratepayers in the Burgh, paying a sum equal to approximately 10% of the Burgh rates.

In 1919 Mr J. B. Scott died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Mr Jas. J. Scott, who is the present Engineer, Manager and Secretary.

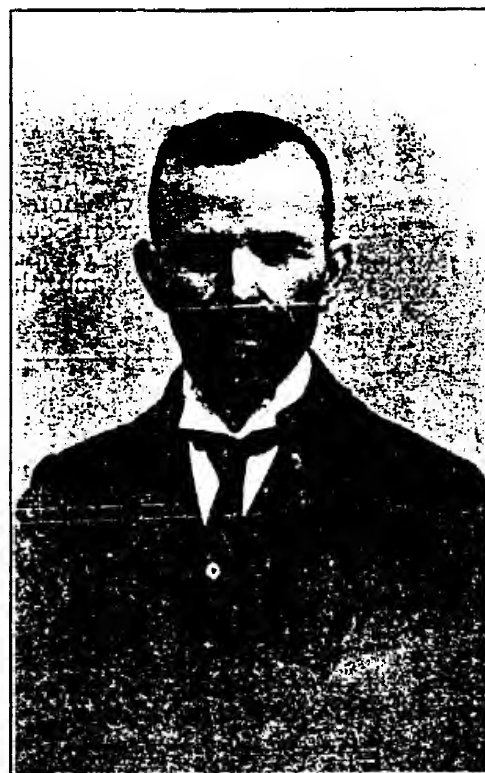
Much of the success of the Company was due to the energy and enterprise of Mr J. B. Scott. He was one of the foremost gas engineers of his day, and his work for the Gas Industry in Scotland was appreciated and recognised by the industry.

On the death of Mr George Terris he was succeeded by his son, Mr James A. Terris, as secretary until his retirement in 1931.

Mr James Hutton, chairman, died in 1923, and to his courage, guidance and foresight the Company owes much of its success.

He was succeeded by the present chairman, Mr J. Miller Thomson.

In the meantime, as stated previously, the Town Council introduced electric lighting for their streets, and despite great inconvenience through damage to their cables by underground workings, gradually improved the system until now the street lighting is among the best in the country.



Mr McAughey, First Burgh Foreman

CHURCHES AND OTHER RELIGIOUS BODIES.

The first church, Kirk of Beath, though it is not actually in the Burgh, has already been dealt with. As the village grew, there were naturally a number of "seceders," and there was a demand for a church to suit their faith. The first church then was the Free Church, built

in 1862 in Factory Road, and the building is now used as a blacksmith's shop. Mr Johnmann, a young man, was the first to be put in charge of the congregation, and he was followed after a few years by the Rev. Andrew Anderson. It was not a wealthy congregation by any means, and the minister and the congregation had often a difficult task to get as much money as give the minister little more than a bare existence. There was no manse for some time, but later the congregation erected the present manse in Broad Street. The next minister was the Rev. James Muir, and during his ministry the present Guthrie Free Church was erected in High Street. Soon afterwards the present Cairns U.P. Church was built in Church Street, and some time later the Baptist Church in Chapel Street.

The ministers of all the churches were very popular, and the services and bible classes and Sunday schools were very well attended.

In the Guthrie Church, Mr Muir was followed in order by the Rev. Thomas Mitchell, the Rev. J. G. Dawson Scott, the Rev. John Wood, the Rev. Thomas Weir, the Rev. George Baird and the Rev. Dr G. B. Burnet.



Mr Gilmour.

The Rev. Mr Gilmour was first minister of the Cairns U.P. Church, and although he received many tempting

offers from other churches he remained in Cowdenbeath for very many years before he accepted a call to Gateshead. He was succeeded in order by the Rev. J. J. Munro, the Rev. Alex. Stewart, the Rev. J. Salmond and the Rev. R. Douglas Potter.



Rev. J. J. Munro.

The Rev. J. Munro was the first minister of the Baptist Church. He was followed by the Rev. — Henderson, who was followed by the Rev. J. Bennet, under whose ministry the Church was considerably extended. He was followed in order by the Rev. J. B. Frame, the Rev. T. J. Harvey, Rev. A. McKenzie, Rev. J. E. Watson, Rev. E. H. Grant, Rev. James Duff, Rev. Thomas McClure and the Rev. F. Norris Carpenter.

Beath Church at Kirk of Beath always remained a favourite, especially among the older people of the Parish. For many years the Rev. John Sinclair was a prominent personage in the religious life of the town, and while he upheld the dignity of his profession, he imparted into it the lovable nature and the other beautiful traits one likes to associate with such a calling.

Following the formation of the Burgh there arose a desire on the part of a number of the members of Beath Church congregation to have a place of worship inside the town, and this took practical shape when, in 1894, a petition was drawn up to have a Chapel of Ease erected at Cowdenbeath. The matter was taken up jointly by the Presbyteries of Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy, and eventually at a meeting held at Cowdenbeath in July 1894 it was decided to build a church. The following trustees were appointed:—Mr D. O. Duff, Mr A. R. Dick, Mr Andrew Wilson, Mr Sydney Binning and Mr Millar, Auchtertool, and the church was designed to serve Cowdenbeath and Little Raith. The Rev. Mr Sinclair of Beath and the Rev. Mr Stevenson of Auchtertool were appointed Joint Conveners of the Committee in charge of the matter.

considerable number of the members were of the opinion that Mr Aitken would carry on as minister of the new church, but when they went to the forenoon service they found the church door locked. Mr Aitken addressed them at the door, and stated that he could do nothing as far as that service was concerned, but he asked them to come back in the afternoon. Again they found the church door locked, but they took the matter into their own hands and forced an entrance, and Mr Aitken preached to a crowded church.

He never preached in the church again, and shortly afterwards he accepted a call to a charge in the West of Scotland.

The Rev. John Henderson was afterwards appointed and inducted as first



Rev. J. Muir

Before this, a mission was being carried on in Brunton's Hall, the pulpit supply of which was under the direction of the Rev. Mr Sinclair. At the time of the completion of the new church in 1897, the Rev. J. Aitken was in charge of the mission. The first Sunday after the church was completed was a memorable one in the history of the church. A



Rev. J. W. Emslie.

minister of the charge. He was succeeded in order by the Rev. Jas. Francis, the Rev. Robert Muir, the Rev. John Emslie, the Rev. John McMorland, the Rev. A. McKenzie, the Rev. T. McAuslane and the present minister, the Rev. R. H. Porter.

There is no Episcopalian Church in the Burgh, but there are several Episcopalians who attend St Finian's Episcopalian Church in Lumphinnans Road.

The Salvation Army, whose hall is at the corner of Stenhouse Street and Hall Street, has been in the Burgh ever since its formation, and they have carried on in good times and bad their work among the poor classes of the town.



Rev. R. H. Porter

PRINCIPAL OF BAPTIST CHURCH.

A prominent church dignitary associated with Cowdenbeath passed away a year ago in the person of the Rev. Archibald McCaig, the Principal of the Baptist Church College in London. Mr McCaig was one of a few enthusiasts who were responsible for the beginning of the Baptist Church at Cowdenbeath. While at Cowdenbeath, he married Miss Orrock, sister of Mr James Orrock, who was for many years a carting contractor in the town. After leaving Cowdenbeath, he always kept up a close connection with the town which he knew so well as a village, and a few years ago



Mr McCaig.

he paid a visit and was the guest of Bailie Blamey.

Many years ago two evangelistic companies of different creeds used to meet every night at the junction of High Street and Broad Street and, at about twenty-five yards apart, told their audiences how they should be converted according to their respective creeds. The two companies gradually drew nearer each other, and this resulted in a competition of lung power between the different orators. One night the audiences got mixed up and a number of heated debates ensued between the opposing evangelists. Matters looked very bad until the Salvation Army, who used to meet close by and were waiting to start their meeting, entered the "arena," and the Captain implored all parties to stop their squabble and "not give the game away." This the large crowd greatly enjoyed, and the appeal must have had its effect, for both parties never returned and the Salvation Army thereafter got the pitch to themselves.

The Union of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church into the United Free Church was accepted very quietly in Cowdenbeath, but the subsequent Union of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church was not accepted so quietly. A number of the objectors formed themselves into what

was at first known as the United Free Continuing Church, which has now reverted to the United Free Church of Scotland, and its members now worship in Wardlaw Street in a building which was previously a stable.

There is also a church in Perth Road originally provided by the Home Mission Committee of the United Free Church, to serve the needs of Lumphinnans and the surrounding district. The first minister of this church was the Rev. Angus Macdonald, whose ministry extended from 1902 to 1937. Mr Macdonald was succeeded by the present minister, the Rev. Alexander Hutchison.

The Roman Catholic Church in Stenhouse Street was erected in 1921, largely by the efforts of Father O'Brien, who was the priest then in charge. Before the erection of this church the services were held in the Roman Catholic Primary School in Stenhouse Street. Associated with this church there may be specially mentioned the names of Father McIntyre, Father O'Brien, Father Green, Father McQuire (now a bishop) and Father Kenny.

In addition to the above churches, there are several smaller places of public worship for meetings of inhabitants who hold different beliefs. Among them may be mentioned the Church of Christ and the Christian Union in Broad Street, the Church of God in Bridge Street, with other meeting places in Natal Place and Victoria Rooms, High Street, and the Spiritualist Association in Waverley Rooms, School Street. There is also a Gospel Mission in Union Street presided over by Mr Streets, through whose efforts a modern building was erected in 1938.

TEMPERANCE.

In the early nineties when public-house and hotel accommodation was greatly extended, temperance work flourished, and there were three Good Templar Lodges. There was the original Lodge, The Anchor of Hope, in which there were three enthusiasts—the late Provost Russell, Provost Blamey and Mr W. J. Holman (now resident in Wales). Next followed the Gordon Lodge, in which a leading spirit was Mr Ferguson. The third was the Waverley Lodge, in which prominent members were Mr James Barclay (now the Rev. James



Mr W. J. Holman



Rev. James Barclay

Barclay), Mr F. J. Robertson, Mr T. McAughey, Miss Mary Tulloch and Miss Mary Laing. These lodges met weekly, and a large number of men now in public life owe their lessons in public speaking to the debates held in lodge rooms. It is a strange coincidence that these lodges only flourished when public-house trade was also very strong,

and with the reduction in the consumption of intoxicants the Good Templar Lodges gradually went out of existence. The Rechabites and Sons of Temperance have still carried on, owing to some extent to the fact that they are Friendly Societies and distribute sick and other benefits.

YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

The Y.M.C.A. was first started at Cowdenbeath approximately fifty years ago. The members were not numerically strong, but they were enthusiastic, though they did not have the same opportunities for activities as the Y.M.C.A. affords to-day. They met every Sunday morning in a room in Cowdenbeath Public School when, after opening with prayer and a hymn or psalm, a member gave a "paper" on an interesting and generally topical subject. The membership numbered about a dozen, and the meeting always finished in time for the members to go to their respective churches at a quarter past eleven. The leading members were Miss Masterton, sister of Mr Masterton, late of Foulford School; Miss Roe, Miss Currall, sewing mistress in Cowdenbeath School; Mr Tom Beveridge and his brother Walter, and Mr Joseph Holman, now in charge of Foyers Church, Inverness.

For a long time the Y.M.C.A. lay dormant until it was revived about twenty years ago, when the Association acquired a billiard saloon and house in No. 7 Pit Road. They were quite successful in their various activities till these were cut short by the outbreak of the war, when their premises were taken over for a First-aid Post. They are now occupying temporary rooms in High Street. The members set to and not only made these rooms suitable for their meeting place but have also installed there a canteen for members of the Forces.

Sport

EARLY STRUGGLES.

FOOTBALL.

Though Cowdenbeath was once referred to—and quite correctly—as a town of sportsmen, they have only

reached prominence in one section of sport, and that, as is generally known, is football. In this sport there is only one competition from which they have never brought distinction to the town and that is the Scottish Cup, for in one season they finished up with a worthy position in the First Division of the League table. Honours in the Scottish Cup have always evaded them, and sportsmen as they are, bad luck and misfortune has attributed to their failure on at least two occasions. In 1880 there were at least two junior teams in the village—Cowdenbeath Rangers and Cowdenbeath Thistle—while a third was in existence for a few years at a later date: Moss Rovers. The original team was the Rangers, and their origin makes very interesting reading. In the seventies, three families came to reside at Cowdenbeath from Ayrshire—Dougarys, Pollocks and Fergusons—and have remained there ever since. In one family especially, that of Pollock, there was a number of sons who were keen football players, and of these sons two were very clever on the ball. It is a strange feature that all these teams flourished in the South end of the village. The Thistle played near Thistle Street and the Moss Rovers played near the Moss Houses, and the Rangers played in the Jubilee Park.



Mrs Pollock.

By this time there were several senior teams in the county, including the strong-going Lassodie and Burntisland, Raith Rovers, Kelty and Lochgelly Athletic (which became Lochgelly United). It was thus apparent that Cowdenbeath, to get a place in the football of the county, had to follow suit, and a combination of the Thistle and Rangers brought this about. It was thus possible to get together such players as Paterson (goalkeeper), J. Dougary, J. Drummond (backs), Bob Law and Lee (half-backs), and the following forwards: John and James Pollock, the Geddes brothers, Gray, and the Lister brothers. There were many reserve players, and the secretary was John Miller, a miner, who occupied that position for at least three years before the secretarial work was taken over by John Bolton, son of the Cowdenbeath Stationmaster, who now lives in retirement in Dunfermline.

A junior team was formed a few years later called St Leonards, and they played on a pitch in Moss-side Road near the present Guthrie Church manse. This club provided several outstanding players for Cowdenbeath.

The new senior team soon made a

minds to do better the next year, and were successful in winning the County Cup, and two of their victories were against the very strong Burntisland Club and their keen rivals, Dunfermline



David Pollock.

Club, whom they defeated in the final by two goals to nothing.

The Club set their minds then on bigger things, and two years later were in the fourth round of the Scottish Cup, but, alas! at Cambuslang they went out of the competition.

PLAYERS PAID TO PLAY.

The want of finances was a serious drawback to the struggling club. The weekly wages of the team could not be blamed for that, as they not only played for nothing but they actually paid so much a week as members of the club. They were the playing members, but there were others who also were paying and non-playing members.

MORE MISFORTUNES.

Often when playing in a cup tie some distance from Cowdenbeath there was a struggle to raise the necessary money to buy the railway tickets. John Miller,



James Pollock.

name for themselves, as we find two years later they won the Fife Cup after participating in the final of the Fife Consolation Cup. They made up their

the secretary, on one occasion when the team had to go to Renton, could not raise the amount and, as had been his custom, appealed to the stationmaster to get the tickets without immediate payment, but he got a refusal. There was a hurried visit to Mr Charles McLean of the Old Inn, but he reminded Mr Miller that they had not cleared off the last loan—and there was nothing doing. The train was coming in and the disconsolate team were about to leave the station when the stationmaster relented, and off they set for Renton. They were again to be disappointed, for, after their dinner in Glasgow, they were informed that the Scottish Cup tie was off as the pitch was unplayable. However, they engaged a brake with the hope that they would yet get the tie played, but it was definitely off and they had their journey for nothing.

Mr David Pollock, referred to in this article on football, was also one of the original members of Cowdenbeath Angling Club.

custody of the Fife Cup. These seasons were 1888-89, 1889-90, and 1890-91.

A Cowdenbeath veteran who was a faithful supporter, Davie Pollock, brother of the two wingers, states that in his opinion the team who really brought and kept the Fife Cup in Cowdenbeath were:—Paterson; Dougary and Drummond; Law and Lee, Fitzpatrick, James Pollock, Cook, A. Geddes, Robert Geddes and John Pollock.

Paterson was afterwards the station lorryman, Dougary was killed in a mining accident, Drummond was one of three football brothers, the others being George and Tom; Bob Law was one of the heroes of the Donibristle Disaster, and John Pollock died a few years ago in Wales, where he became a brilliant bowler.

Before the Club removed to the North End Park there were other notables in the Cowdenbeath team, and one cannot forget such prominent players as Willie Cowan, the iron man, as left back; and Davie Hughes, who rightly is still looked



Old Cowdenbeath Football Team.

Left to right, back row—H. Geddes, Dow, Hynd, Savage, Law and Thomson. Front row—Beveridge, Hughes, A. Geddes, Graham and A. Todd. Sitting—Weir and Penman.

FIFE CUP CHAMPIONS.

Disappointed in the Scottish Cup, they again set out to be at least champions of Fife, and we find them for three years in succession winning and retaining the

upon as the best exponent of football that ever the county has produced. Cowan died a few months ago at Cowdenbeath, but Davie Hughes had a tragic death when he was found suffocated at the Alice Pit near Cowdenbeath.

MORE FIFE SUCCESS—SCOTTISH FAILURES.

Their continued success in the Fife Cup made them turn their eyes again to the Scottish Cup, and in the same year, 1890-91 they had another strong bid, but though they reached the sixth round they went down at Paisley by the decisive score of eight goals to two. For several years Cowdenbeath Club did nothing outstanding, but in 1894 they again came to the front, and though they had only fair success in the Scottish and Qualifying Cups, they had a really good team in:—Lindsay; Allan and Wood; Paton, Stewart and Nicol; Dryburgh, Collins, Johnstone, Beveridge and Mercer.

By 1901 other players had joined the team, and this photograph, taken at that time, shows the players to have been as given on photograph on previous page.

In the team published, there are several missing, such as the Pollocks, J. Dougary, John Drummond, Lee, Fitzpatrick and Cook.

PROFESSIONALISM COMES ALONG.

Their play was Cowdenbeath's undoing to a certain extent, for already professionalism had entered into the game, and Cowdenbeath lost a number of their stars. At this stage the village postie, Christie, had become secretary, and he signed on two Hearts players—Philip and Pringle. Philip for several years afterwards had a billiard saloon in the town.

Taking advantage of the bidding for good players, Cowdenbeath commenced to be a training school for football players, and many who trained at the North End and later at Central Park were transferred at big transfer fees.

THE GREAT WAR.

The Great War in the meantime came along and interfered with their success as League champions. By this time Sandy Paterson had come on the scene as a manager. Sandy was a Hill of Beath man with varied experiences as a player and manager of Hearts of Beath, and it was under his management that the team gained their promotion to the First Division of the Scottish League. He had the necessary support from Mr A. R. Dick, a gentleman who had for



Mr A. R. Dick.



Mr W. G. Hodge.

many years devoted his energies and outstanding business ability to the raising of the standard of the game at Cowdenbeath. Under his chairmanship the club flourished, and he became a prominent figure not only in Fife football but

among the Scottish legislators. The game was taken to Central Park, and with the erection of the large and commodious stand and enclosure became one of the finest equipped and appointed in Scotland. The war passed, and Cowdenbeath set their plans to secure Scottish Cup honours. In the first year after the war they were on a fair way for this honour.

In 1921 a new Second Division was formed, with relegation and promotion. By this time several stars were in the team, including Adam Scott Duncan (now manager of Ipswich Town), Dick Little, J. R. Smith, Dodds of Celtic fame, and Bobby Tait.

In season 1923-24 more good players were picked up to play along with stars. In the former class were Bill Murray and Hooky Leonard. Bill is now manager of Sunderland Club and Leonard had a hectic but brilliant career while it lasted. Cowdenbeath Club gained promotion, being second to St Johnstone. Scott Duncan was induced to take over the manager's position, as Sandy Paterson had gone to Dunfermline, where he

raised Dunfermline to the First League as well. Cowdenbeath carried on in the First Division for a number of years, but were again relegated in 1933-34. After a few years in the Second Division, a bold bid was made in 1939, when they won the Second Division Championship with a record pointage, and Walls as centre established a record in scoring goals. By this time Mr William Hodge had been appointed President. Bill never posed as an authority on the finer points of football, but he was all the time out to do his very best for the team.

Again the war had interfered with the Club just after gaining success, but there is no doubt that, after hostilities cease, the sporting instinct of the town will again rise and football will again flourish.

Of all the players born and bred in the town, the most outstanding has been "Ally" Venters.



Adam Scott Duncan, a prominent Rangers' player who became manager of Cowdenbeath Football Club in its days of prosperity and is now manager of Ipswich Town. He is married to a well-known Cowdenbeath lady.



Mr John McDougall of Cowdenbeath, who was disabled in the Great War, and who reached the final of one-armed players' Scottish Championship. He is at present captain of Kinghorn Golf Club.

GOLF.

Golf followed, when the principal men interested who played on the first course of Leuchatsbeath were Dr Naismith, John Bolton, John A. R. Finlay, Andrew Lindsay and James Stormonth. The game obtained a very strong footing after the new course was laid down by Cowdenbeath Public-House Society at the North end of the town.

CURLING.

Curling was also a favourite sport, and prominent players were Archie Hodge, Jimmy Orrock, Andrew Wilson, John Paul, Charlie Barclay, John Finlay, etc. A common challenge was that of Jimmy Orrock that he would play Archie Hodge for a bag o' meal.

CRICKET.

Cricket followed in due course with enthusiasts like Sydney Binning, the Beattie brothers, Sandy Rankine, David Adams, Geordie Syme, Willie Syme and Sandy Stevenson.



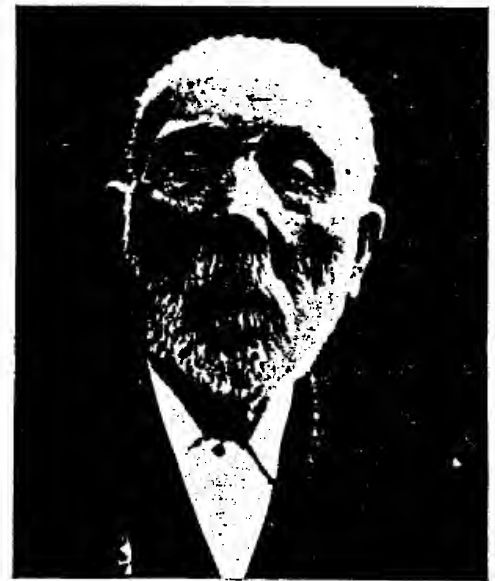
Sydney Binning.

BOWLING.

Bowling is definitely one of the sports that has come to stay. Cowdenbeath Bowling Club have a green at Bowling Green Street, and there is another green at the rear of the Miners' Welfare Institute in Broad Street.



Mr G. S. Eastwood, a county cricketer



*Mr John Ford
(Cowdenbeath centenarian)*



*Mr Holman
(Chairman of Public-House Society)*

**COWDENBEATH PUBLIC-HOUSE
SOCIETY, LIMITED.**

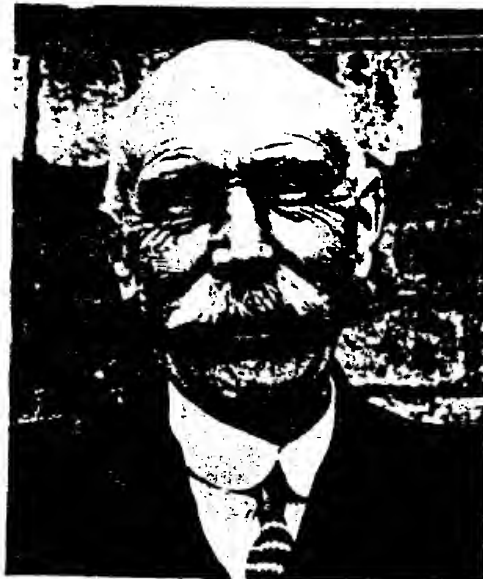
This Society, which was formed in 1901, became the owners of the public-house premises situated at the corner of High Street and Station Road. Between 1901 and 1925 they gave away in grants for social and charitable purposes the sum of £18,931, of which £4,380 was towards the cost of a District Nurse, £7,016 for a Public Park, and £3,379 for the Golf Course, laid out and opened in 1910 by Tom Ball and Ben Sayers.



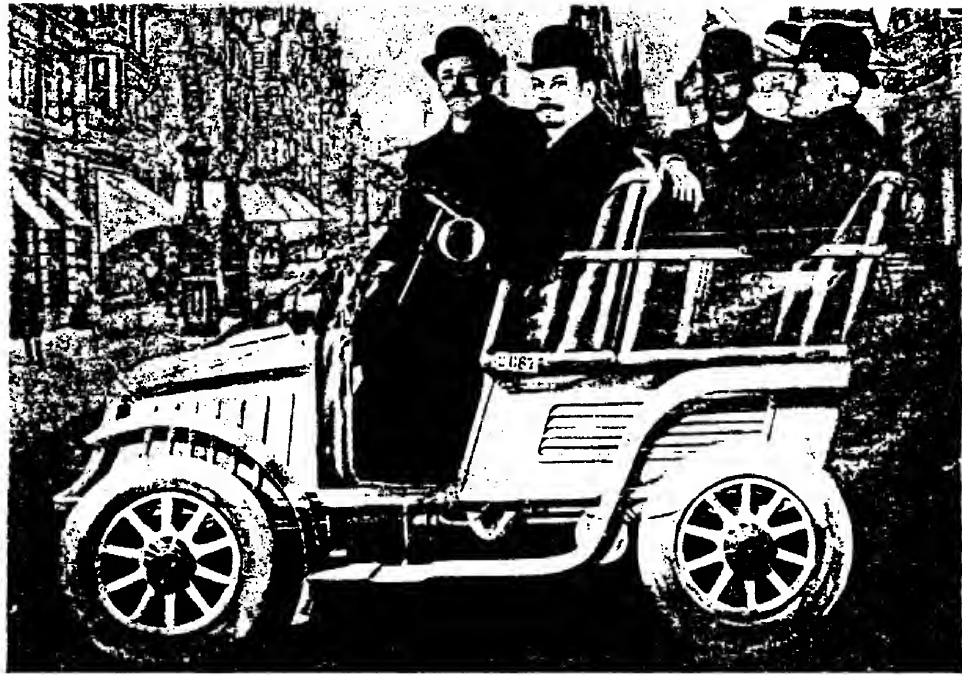
*Lieut. W. K. Barclay, founder of
Cowdenbeath Rifle Club and original
officer of Cowdenbeath Territorials, a
victim of last war.*



Miss Alexander, a gold medal vocalist



*Mr R. Black
(Promoter of Old Folk's Treat)*



*Early days of motoring. Cowdenbeath Councillors' Day Out.
Provost Penman, Councillor H. Kelso, Provost Wilson and Provost Barclay.*



Mr Ewans (a veteran violin maker)



*Mr W. M. Crooks
(A.R.P. Deputy Area Controller)*



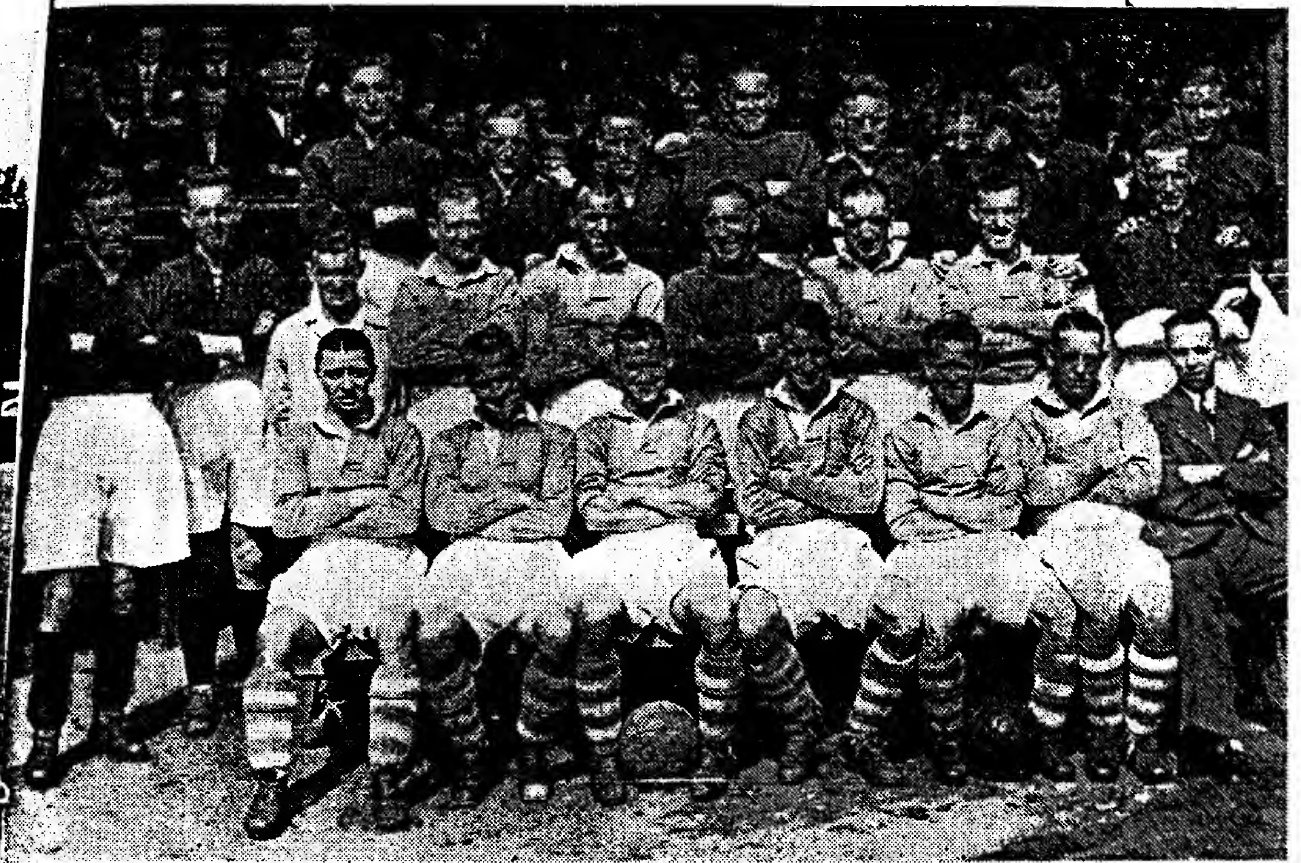
Cowdenbeath Bowling Green veterans at play



*Mr C. C. Reid
(General Manager, Fife Coal Co.)*



Provost Barclay



Prominent Cowdenbeath Players



Mr Westwater (veteran newsagent and first member of Cairns Church)

*A Popular Doctor.
Dr Sellkirk, Cowdenbeath's
First Motorist.*



Personalities

Mr W. M. Watson.

A Cowdenbeath minister who had left the town before Mr Watson had been elected Member of Parliament for Dunfermline Burghs stated that he well remembered a young man coming up High Street of Cowdenbeath with several volumes under his arm, and that inquiry might have shown that the authors were such men as Ruskin,



Mr W. M. Watson, M.P.

Carlyle, Adam Smith or Karl Marx. To those who know William Watson best that must appeal to them as his best portrait. One feels that he has been the victim of politics, and, while no one can gainsay that he has served his constituency faithfully and well, the strong probability is that if he had been allowed to carry on his studies, his friends and the country at large would have been better off to-day.

Willie Watson was a student of psychology and the social conditions of the times, and his great ambition was that he would be able to benefit the working classes of the country with whose interests he was so closely allied.

Himself a member of a miner's family, by his experience underground he gained an inside knowledge of the common lot of the coal miner, whose value and worth to the country have never been properly recognised. This experience was worth all the privations

he endured and the inconveniences he "tholed." He could quite easily have mastered the studies that would have made him in time a qualified colliery manager, but such a prospect was not to his liking. His experiences and his favourite books pointed out to him a far more satisfying way of doing his best for his fellow-men by improving their working and social conditions. It was in this direction that he set his compass. He was a practical psychologist and social reformer for, after gaining a large amount of knowledge, he associated himself with the small band of socialist workers in the town who, like him, devoted their energies to the raising of the standard of the working classes. That small coterie was not a popular one and he, like the rest, had often to bear the hard and unjust criticism of those whom they were out to help. Many a strong man would have replied to that criticism and ostracism by taking less interest in the affairs of those whom they strove to serve, but he and the others were made of sterner stuff and continued to do what they had set out to do. Their work bore fruit and socialism became something real. Labour took an active interest in municipal and Parliamentary affairs, and it is to the credit of the large number of those who had changed their politics to that of labour that they chose one who had done so much spade work in the past as their Parliamentary representative. Into the maelstrom of politics went Willie Watson. He has been an ideal Member of Parliament, especially in his work behind the scenes. He has never let his private affairs interfere with the interests of his constituents, and this to such an extent that his private life scarcely exists. No one in trouble and needing advice or assistance is ever turned away, and no bar of politics or creed is allowed.

One feels, however, that Willie Watson's life of usefulness has been hampered rather than helped by his political life and that he would have been truer to himself and his friends of the working classes had he worked from the outside rather than the inside of Parliament. This is the day of

specialists, and there is a strong belief that had he not been thrust into Parliament the Labour world and the world in general would to-day have had in Mr Watson an international authority on world affairs.

In conclusion, a fitting tribute to Mr Watson is contained in the following lines by Mr J. C. Welsh, the Miners' Poet:—

"As constant as the ocean tide, as loyal as the sun;

If I could pick fair Virtue's sides, Will Watson would be one.

And virtue would not blush to own this member of her team,

Too good to push himself alone, too honest to be mean."

Mrs E. Watson.

In compiling the history of Cowdenbeath a place must be set aside for a lady who has been prominent in the social life of the town, Mrs W. M. Watson.

The wives of many Members of Parliament are known only because of the fact that they are so, but this is not the case with Mrs Watson, who is quite as



Mrs Watson.

popular and well known in the town and community as her husband and where her name is truly a household word.

Brought up in Cowdenbeath, she became first a pupil and later a teacher in Cowdenbeath Public School, where she gained an experience that was valuable to her when she became a member of Beath School Board in 1911.

Three years later she became Chairman of that body, which position she held until the Education Act of 1918 came into force. By this time she had made her presence felt in educational affairs as she was the prime mover of the free books scheme which was introduced in the Parish of Beath, and later throughout Fife. She continued her activities as a member of Fife Education Committee and served on that body until 1930.

She was elected a member of Cowdenbeath Town Council in 1936, and for four years she has represented the Burgh on Fife County Council.

For twenty-two years she has been a member of the Board of Management of Cowdenbeath Co-operative Society—a record for a lady—and has been President of the Co-operative Women's Guild for Scotland for four years. For fourteen years she has been associated with the Cowdenbeath Nursing Association, and has been a hard worker on the War Pensions Committee from 1915 till the present time. She was one of the leading persons in the W.V.S., one of three selected for Scotland, and is now acting in connection with the Price of Goods Act for East and South of Scotland, and for the Food Control Committee for the same area. She was closely associated with the I.L.P. until the split when the Labour Party left that body.

Mrs Watson has had various honours conferred on her, including that of Justice of the Peace, and O.B.E. after the last War. Mrs Watson does not parade these honours. An official of the Education Authority who is acquainted with her work on public bodies writes as follows:—

"When I want to draw a mental picture of Mrs Watson under the best conditions I recall a picture of her in the Special School at Cowdenbeath. She was responsible for this school being brought into existence, a school for the education of backward children. As a teacher, she was well aware of the tragic fate of backward children. Teachers could not afford to set the pace of education of a class on the ability of the slowest pupil. They were simply left behind and neglected, and when they did leave school it was not because they had reached a satisfactory educational standard but that they had

reached the leaving age. Thus, she often saw the tragedy of a child of twelve to fourteen years of age, according to the leaving age, being thrust into the world with a mental age of between seven and nine years, with not the slightest chance of competing for positions in life that required a small amount of education. This set her thinking, and, mainly through her efforts, the Special School came into existence at Cowdenbeath. There, each child is taught according to his or her ability. Patience is expended on them, and the educational results have been extraordinary. One pupil I know rose to be manager of a grocer's shop, and others are now filling positions they otherwise would not have had the slightest chance of securing but for the Special School. Mrs Watson had first to break down the prejudice of the School Board and, worse and more annoying, the prejudice of the parents who were out against their children going to a 'daft' school. Many a one would have replied to such undeserved opposition by simply giving them their own way because of their lack of appreciation, but not Mrs Watson. She knew she was right and she has won out, but I often wonder if she will ever receive the proper appreciation which she deserves.

"The picture I referred to is of her in the Special School at Cowdenbeath, standing amongst the boys and girls all so happy in her presence. These children got their chance in life from Mrs Watson, and cherished letters from them and memories of their laughing faces is one reward of her labours which she will always cherish."

Mr Archibald Hodge.

Of all the early inhabitants of Cowdenbeath the greatest all-round personality was undoubtedly Mr Archibald Hodge, who had a large share in the development and shaping of the town. Archie came, as a boy, with his parents from Keltie. After school Archie found employment in the coal mines, and his work was of such a satisfactory nature that he became an underground official. As the coal industry prospered the time came for the sinking of another shaft, and Archie became responsible for the sinking of the well-known No. 3 Pit.

It was only natural, therefore, when the sinking was completed that he should be appointed as "Gaffer" of the Pit. Under his capable management the pit proved to be a successful venture and to a large extent contributed to the success of Cowdenbeath Coal Company. He worked hard in the interests of his employers, and it is related that on one occasion when in a hurry to get down the pit, instead of waiting for the cage



Mr Hodge.

to go down, he slid down the cage rope. He was always very considerate of the men under him, especially of the older men who had spent the best part of their lives in the coal mine, and as long as they were able to go down the pit and do some sort of work he allowed them to carry on. In these days of oncost work, whether down the pit or on the surface, a man's authority to work was the getting of a shovel from the gaffer. Archie gave the old men each a shovel, and though he did not look for more work than they were able to do, and some did very little, they dare not discard their shovel if he was around, and the mere fact that an old man had his shovel was sufficient indication that he was earning his wages. On the other hand, he expected the general worker to earn the wages paid him. Some time later he took over the licensed grocer's business belonging

to James Meikle in High Street, and with the help of his two daughters, Jenny and Maggie, that business prospered. Eventually, he left the management of the shop to his elder daughter, but he was never far away from the premises. He was a man of very few words and of a gruff exterior. He was anything but sociable in conversation, but those who really knew him found that this abrupt manner of conversation was a very effective cloak for his highly generous nature and for his abhorrence of anything that was not straight or genuine.

Take another side of his character. He always paid his way by meeting accounts as early as possible and never liked to be asked for money, so that one day when a commercial traveller presented his bill with a tone of "payment wanted now" Erchie said nothing, but went into his office and returned with the money. The traveller signed the account, adding "Paid with thanks," but Erchie was not having that. "Na, na," man, just you write doon there 'Paid wi' cash.'"

Here is a story which is retailed at the risk of arousing the displeasure of the family, but it is told in an effort to illustrate his true character and to remove any erroneous misconception from the minds of those who did not know him. The premises of the old Cowdenbeath Reading Room, the use of which had been given to the community by Cowdenbeath Coal Company free of rent and taxes and with free coal and light, became too small and the Committee were anxious to enlarge the building and provide a games room and improve the lending library and reading room accommodation. Plans were prepared, and the cost was estimated to be in the region of a thousand pounds. The Committee had less than one hundred pounds in hand. The matter was discussed in all its aspects. Eventually, two men were appointed to interview Erchie Hodge. The interview ended something like this:—

"Do ye ken what ye are thinking aboot?"

"Do ye ken the property is no yours and the Fife Coal Company can turn ye oot at a meenut's notice?"

"Yes, we have considered that."

"And do ye still want to cairry on

wi' the alterations?"

"Yes."

"An' hoo are ye gaun to pey it back?"

"We cannot guarantee, but we are hoping for the best."

"Weel, weel," said Erchie, "if ye think it." With that he turned and left the deputation, who thought that was the end of the matter so far as he was concerned, but not so, for in two minutes' time he returned with the sum required to make the alterations.

"How will we pay you back?" they said.

"Jist hoo ye like, and ye needna bother aboot ony interest on the money. I'll just tak' the siller when you hae it tae gie me."

Archie was a keen bowler and a keener curler, and was first President of Cowdenbeath Bowling Club. He was treasurer of the Cowdenbeath Ambulance Waggon Association for several years, and when he retired the Committee showed their appreciation of his services by presenting him with a piece of silver, but instead of thanking them in the usual manner he gave them a severe scolding for daring to spend their money on him.

All they got was "Ye had nae business daeing that and I'm no wanting that," and the present was not taken out of the packing that night.

Still the silver plate, suitably inscribed, will long be cherished by the family in memory of their father who did so much for Cowdenbeath.

Just a closing story. Erchie never liked to have his photograph taken, but one day he allowed this to be done to please his family. When he saw the result his sole comment was: "Weel, it may be a guid likeness, but it's a sorry picter."

Mr Thomas Blamey.

Prominent among all public men in Cowdenbeath stands out one man, Mr Thomas Blamey. It will be a difficult matter to catalogue all the different bodies with which Mr Blamey has been connected at one time or another, but it is sufficient to say that he has devoted a lifetime to the interests of the community.

Mr Blamey, whose parents came from Cornwall, was born in one of the houses known as "Diamond Row" in High

Street. Mr Blamey's father lost his life in the pit, and his mother was left to bring up a young family on her own exertions. This has given Mr Blamey an education that he would otherwise have missed, an education that has been applied to the benefit of the town and its inhabitants.

An American millionaire once said to the writer that he had a great ambition to be a journalist and an author, but he suffered from one drawback to that ambition, and that was his wealth. This is true to a very large extent, and the people of Cowdenbeath should be thankful that Mr Blamey was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth. One Cowdenbeath man who has been a life-long friend of Mr Blamey has stated that he has been one of the most misunderstood men in public life. One reason given for this is that Mr Blamey has always refused to be confined in his public work by the restrictions of party politics. He judges each question entirely on its merits and its possible effect on the community, and his support or criticism is based only on that principle.

Over forty years ago he was an active member of the Anchor of Hope Good Templar Lodge and here learned the rules of public debate. He then allied himself to the Baptist Church and has remained a faithful member. For some time he kept out of politics until the claims of the working people of the country gained his sympathy and seeing in the Labour Party an opportunity to improve the conditions of his fellow-workmen, he joined that Party. As a member, he believed with the other members that their purpose could best be served by representation on local public bodies, and it was no surprise when he was among the first to stand election for office. Success attended his nominations, and soon he was a member of four bodies:—Beath School Board, Cowdenbeath Town Council and Fife County Council. Having secured such a large share of public confidence, he fashioned his public work to merit it. He studied all the laws and legislation which governed those different bodies, and to-day he is looked upon as an authority on all matters pertaining to Local Government.

This was first of all apparent in educational administration, and his

intimate knowledge of the Education Acts helped him greatly as a member of Beath School Board and Chairman of Beath School Management Committee, and later of Fife Education Committee and Fife County Council.

In Town Council administration he studied the work of the different departments, but in one department he has excelled himself, that of housing and town planning, and, as Convener of the



Mr Haldane.

Few persons have risen to prominence in music or literature with, perhaps, the exception of Mr J. H. Haldane, the well-known Brass Band Conductor, whose teaching has won honours for several bands.

Housing Committee he is in his right place. In critical debates his intimate knowledge of all legislation affecting housing has surprised even his nearest friends. When convinced that he is right he refuses to budge, and though he has often accepted with grace the majority ruling against him, he often found himself in the position of being able to say afterwards "I told you so," but refrained. He is at present Convener of the A.R.P. Committee of the Town Council and Convener of the Public Health Committee of the County Council.

His golden rule seems to be:—"Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," while his life's work might well be fashioned around the motto: "Honesty is the best policy, but we should not be honest because it is the best policy, but because it is right."



Jack Jones, hero of Moss Morran Disaster.

The Fight for Freedom

Cowdenbeath did not show a lack of patriotism during the Great War, nor is she doing so on the occasion of the present war. A large number of her sons made the supreme sacrifice in the last war—as the names inscribed on the War Memorial on the North End Hill gives testimony. At the time of writing, although quite a number of Cowdenbeath natives have been made prisoners of war after the capitulation of France, only a very few have given their lives in this great struggle for freedom and democracy.



Mr McKelvie, R.A.F.



Private Oliver.



Corporal Young.

Safety in Mines

Despite Government legislation, a regrettable feature of the coal industry has been the number of accidents that took place, a large percentage of which were fatal, and the number increased with the introduction of machinery and the speeding up of coal production.

Several years ago, however, the Fife Coal Company commenced a greater safety campaign, and it has proved to be a great success in the reduction in the number of accidents. A safety engineer was appointed—Dr Williamson—who devotes all his time and energy to schemes whereby the accidents in mines will be reduced to a minimum. Each colliery has its safety committee, who hold regular meetings when the accidents are reported in detail, so that such accidents can be prevented. Safety articles of clothing have been introduced and are in general use.

Safety classes for boys are being held, with the result that when a boy commences work he is fully aware of all the dangers that are to be met with during the course of his employment.

Since the inception of these classes, approximately three thousand safety certificates have been issued. Besides these safety classes for boys there are also classes for adults, and it is highly significant that the employees are co-operating with the management in all the various schemes that are accomplishing so much. The success attained is now generally recognised, and last year Captain H. Cruikshanks, Minister of Mines, paid a visit to Cowdenbeath to get the latest information about the greater safety campaign.

Mine Rescue Station



Mr Stevenson.

The Fife, Kinross and Clackmannan Coalowners' Association Mine Rescue Station is in Stenhouse Street, Cowdenbeath. In this building a very large number of men have been trained in mine rescue work. A gentleman closely associated with this building is the late Mr David Stevenson. He took a very prominent interest in ambulance training and rescue work in mines, and he was the unanimous choice for the position of Superintendent. Following his death the appointment of a successor naturally fell on his son, Alexander Stevenson, who was his father's first assistant and who performed such outstanding work in recent mine disasters in Scotland, notably Redding, Bowhill, and Valleyfield.



Visit of Captain Cruikshanks.



Presentation of Certificates.

Among the many photographs in this book are several for the use of which we are indebted to Messrs Given & Paton (Cowdenbeath), the Proprietors of the *Cowdenbeath Advertiser*, the Proprietors of the *Dunfermline & West Fife Journal*, and Cowdenbeath Co-operative Society.



Ballie Blamey.



Treasurer Sinclair.



Police Judge
Primmer.



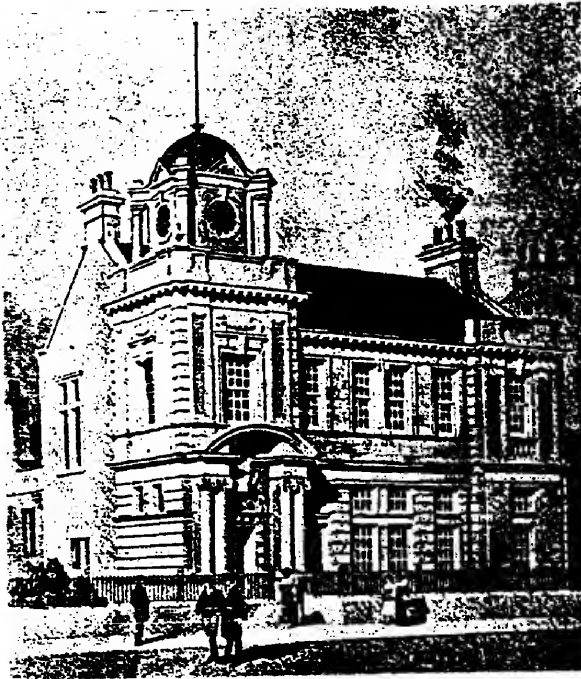
Ballie Maxwell.



Provost Young



Ballie Walker.



Ballie Drylie.



Dean of Gullid
Selkirk.



D. Fairlie.



Mrs Watson.



Dr W. Reid.



W. Ewing



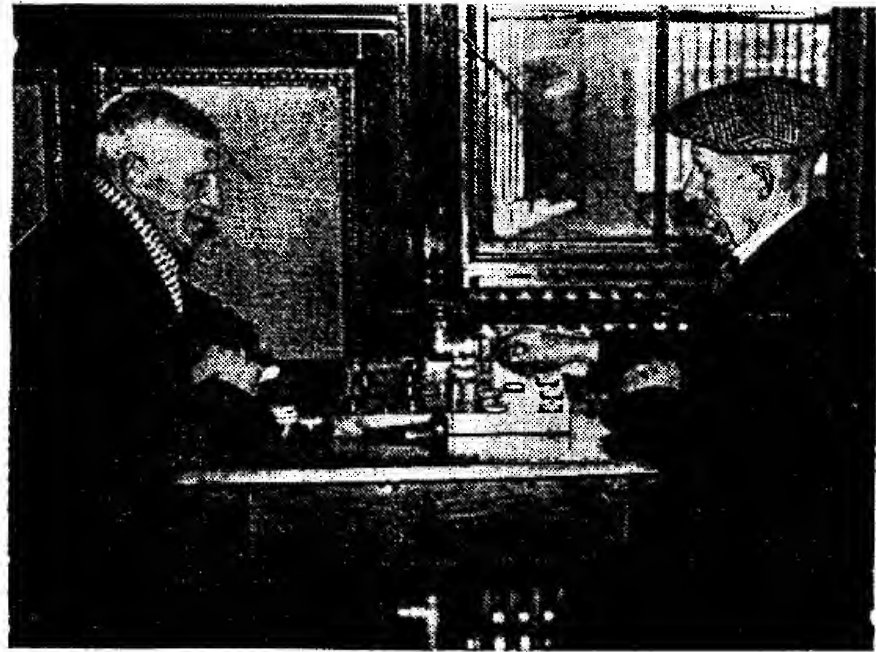
Champion First-aiders from No. 7 Pit, Cowdenbeath.

Left to right—Sitting—W. Ferguson (capt.), W. Reid (manager), W. E. S. Peach (agent), A. Prentice (under-manager).

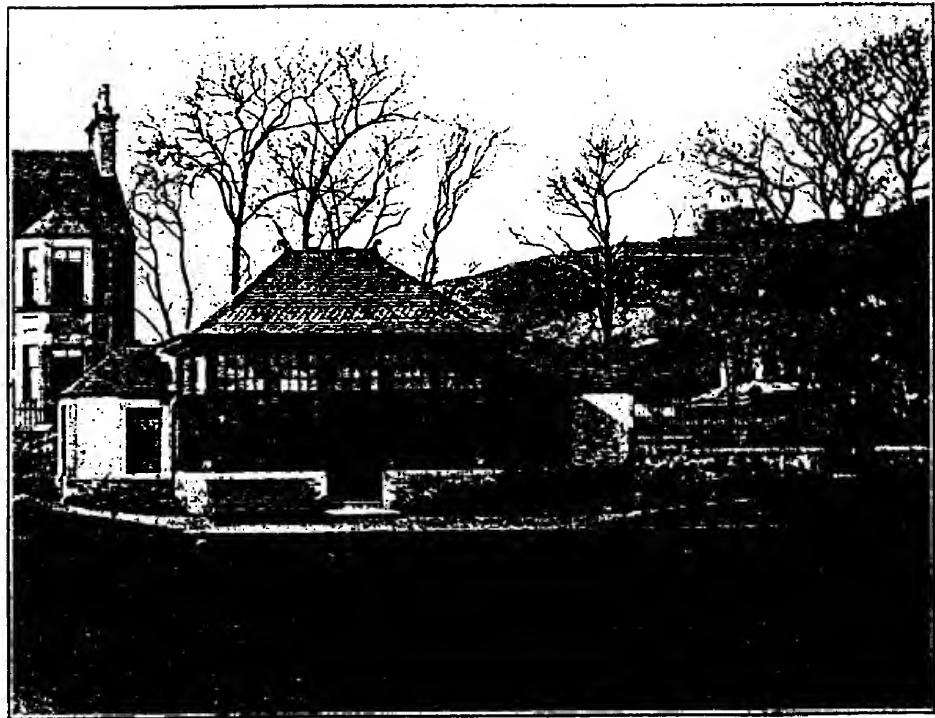
Standing—David Fernie, W. Spittal, A. Bain, T. Bonnar, and J. Davidson.



Raising Cowdenbeath Championship Flag 1939



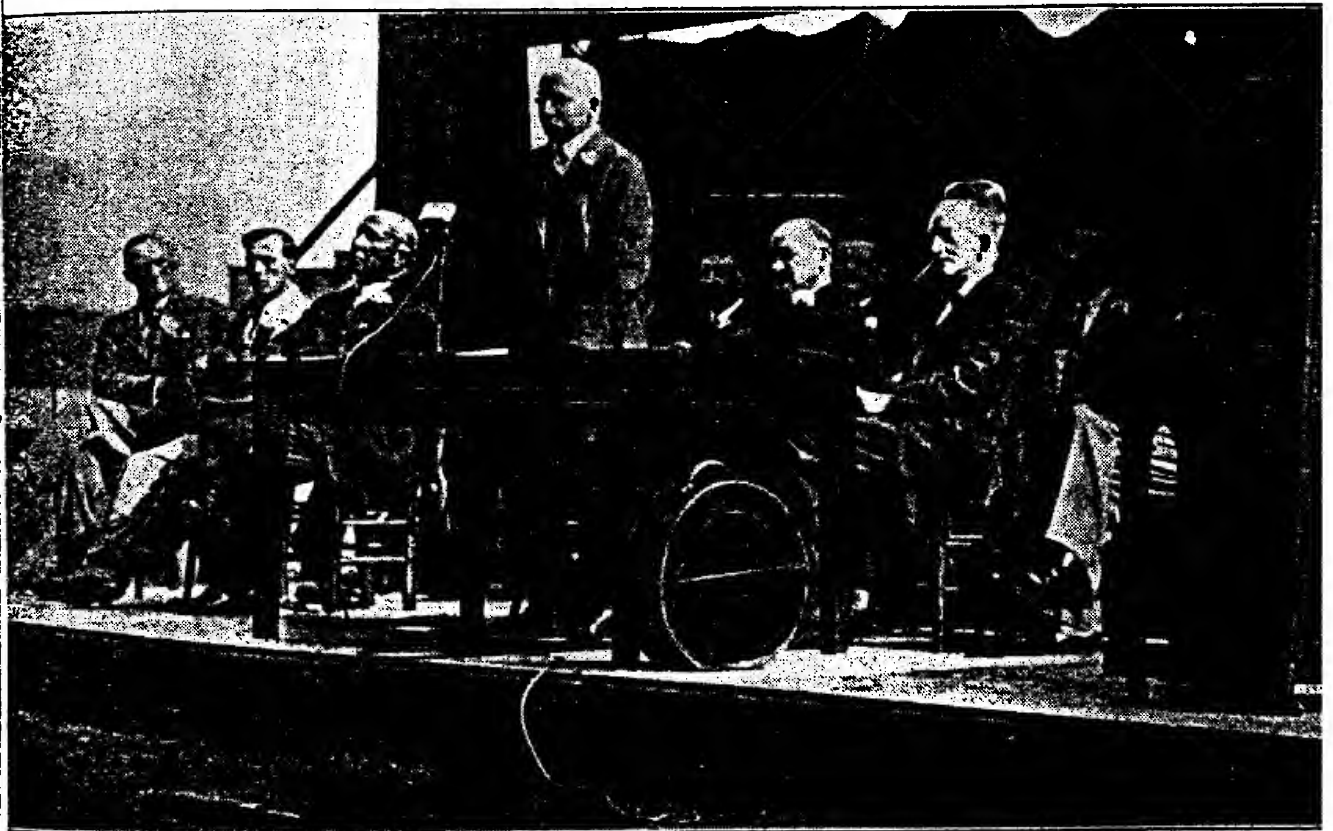
Veteran Miners at Play.



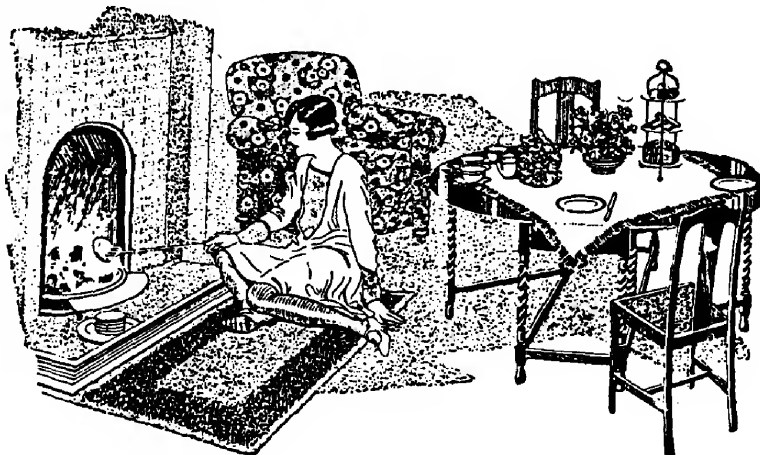
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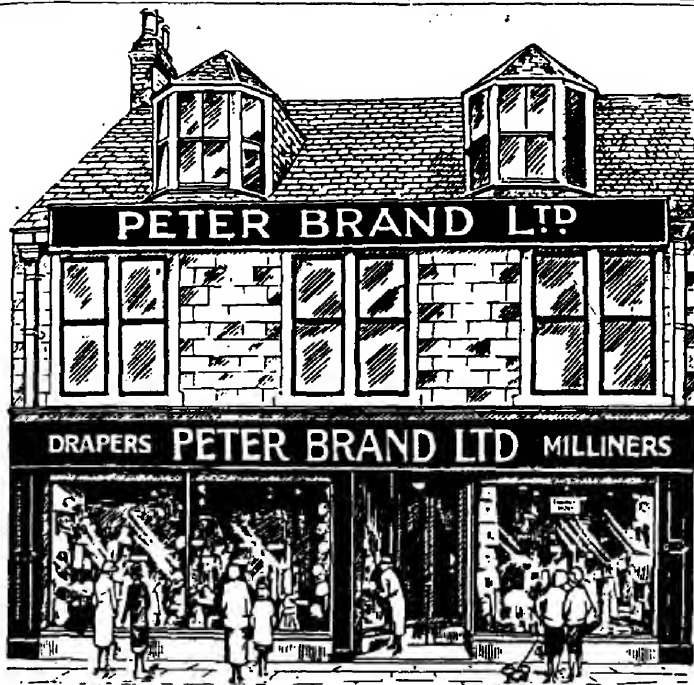
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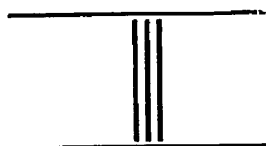
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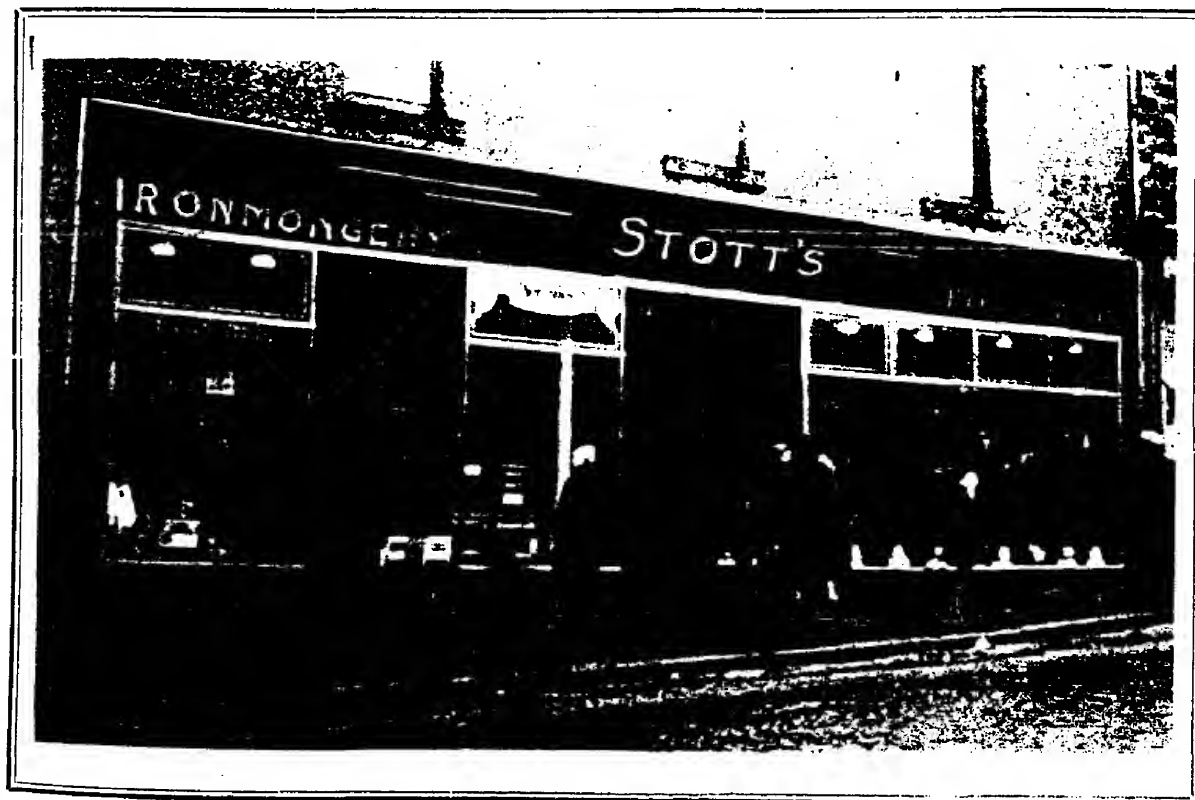


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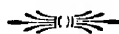
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